Riverside Literature Series

KIPLING
Stories and Poems Every Child Should Know
BOOK II

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The Riverside Literature Series

Kipling Stories and Poems Every Child Should Know

BOOK II

From Rudyard Kipling's The Seven Seas, The Day's Work, Etc.

EDITED BY
MARY E. BURT AND W. T. CHAPIN, PH.D. (Princeton)

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A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

BY CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

THE deep and widespread interest which the writings of Mr. Rudyard Kipling have excited has naturally led to curiosity concerning their author and to a desire to know the conditions of his life. Much has been written about him which has had little or no foundation in truth. It seems, then, worth while, in order to prevent false or mistaken reports from being accepted as trustworthy, and in order to provide for the public such information concerning Mr. Kipling as it has a right to possess, that a correct and authoritative statement of the chief events in his life should be given to it. This is the object of the following brief narrative.

Rudyard Kipling was born at Bombay on the 30th of December, 1865. His mother, Alice, daughter of the Rev. G. B. Macdonald, a Wesleyan preacher, eminent in that denomination, and his father, John Lockwood Kipling, the son also of a Wesleyan preacher, were both of Yorkshire birth. They had been married in London early in the year, and they named their first-born child after the pretty lake in

Staffordshire on the borders of which their acquaintance had begun. Mr. Lockwood Kipling, after leaving school, had served his apprenticeship in one of the famous Staffordshire potteries at Burslem, had afterward worked in the studio of the sculptor, Mr. Birnie Philip, and from 1861 to 1865 had been engaged on the decorations of the South Kensington Museum. During our American war and in the years immediately following, the trade of Bombay was exceedingly flourishing, the city was immensely prosperous, a spirit of inflation possessed the Government and the people alike, there were great designs for the improvement and rebuilding of large portions of the town, and a need was felt for artistic oversight and direction of the works in hand and contemplated. The distinction which Mr. Lockwood Kipling had already won by his native ability and thorough training led to his being appointed in 1865 to go to Bombay as the professor of Architectural Sculpture in the British School of Art which had been established there.

It was thus that Rudyard Kipling came to be born in the most cosmopolitan city of the Eastern world, and it was there and in its neighbourhood that the first three years of the boy's life were spent, years in which every child receives ineffaceable impressions, shaping his conceptions of the world, and in which a child of peculiarly sensitive nature and active disposition, such as this boy possessed, lies open to

myriad influences that quicken and give colour to the imagination.

In the spring of 1868 he was taken by his mother for a visit to England, and there, in the same year, his sister was born. In the next year his mother returned to India with both her children, and the boy's next two years were spent at and near Bombay.

He was a friendly and receptive child, eager, interested in all the various entertaining aspects of life in a city which, "gleaning all races from all lands," presents more diversified and picturesque varieties of human condition than any other, East or West. A little incident which his mother remembers is not without a pretty allegoric significance. It was at Nasik, on the Dekhan plain, not far from Bombay; the little fellow trudging over the ploughed field, with his hand in that of the native husbandman, called back to her in the Hindustani, which was as familiar to him as English, "Good-bye, this is my brother."

In 1871 Mr. and Mrs. Kipling went with their children to England, and being compelled to return to India the next year, they took up the sorrow common to Anglo-Indian lives, in leaving their children "at home," in charge of friends at Southsea, near Portsmouth. It was a hard and sad experience for the boy. The originality of his nature and the independence of his spirit had already become clearly manifest, and were likely to render him unintelligible and perplexing to whosoever might have charge of him unless

they were gifted with unusual perceptions and quick sympathies. Happily his mother's sister, Mrs. (now Lady) Burne-Jones, was near at hand, in case of need, to care for him.

In the spring of 1877 Mrs. Kipling came to England to see her children, and was followed the next year by her husband. The children were removed from Southsea, and Rudyard, grown into a companionable, active-minded, interesting boy, now in his thirteenth year, had the delight of spending some weeks in Paris, with his father, attracted thither by the exhibition of that year. His eyesight had been for some time a source of trouble to him, and the relief was great from glasses, which were specially fitted to his eyes, and with which he has never since been able to dispense.

On the return of his parents to India, early in 1878, Rudyard was placed at the school of Westward Ho, at Bideford, in Devon. This school was one chiefly intended for the sons of members of the Indian services, most of whom were looking forward to following their fathers' careers as servants of the Crown. It was in charge of an admirable head-master, Mr. Cormell Price, whose character was such that he won the affection of his boys no less than their respect. The young Kipling was not an easy boy to manage. He chose his own way. His talents were such that he might have held a place near the highest in his studies, but he was content to let others surpass him

in lessons, while he yielded to his genius in devoting himself to original composition and to much reading in books of his own choice. He became the editor of the school paper, he contributed to the columns of the local Bideford *Journal*, he wrote a quantity of verse, and was venturesome enough to send a copy of verses to a London journal, which, to his infinite satisfaction, was accepted and published. Some of his verses were afterward collected in a little volume, privately printed by his parents at Lahore, with the title "Schoolboy Lyrics." All through his time at school his letters to his parents in India were such as to make it clear to them that his future lay in the field of literature.

His literary gifts came to him by inheritance from both the father and mother, and they were nurtured and cultivated in the circle of relatives and family friends with whom his holidays were spent. A sub-master at Westward Ho, though little satisfied with the boy's progress in the studies of the school, gave to him the liberty of his own excellent library. The holidays were spent at the Grange, in South Kensington, the home of his aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. Burne-Jones, and here he came under the happiest possible domestic influences, and was brought into contact with men of highest quality, whose lives were given to letters and the arts, especially with William Morris, the closest intimate of the household of the Grange. Other homes were open to him where the

pervading influence was that of intellectual pursuits, and where he had access to libraries through which he was allowed to wander and to browse at his will. The good which came to him, directly and indirectly, from these opportunities can hardly be overstated. To know, to love, and to be loved by such a man as Burne-Jones was a supreme blessing in his life.

In the autumn of 1882, having finished his course at school, a position was secured for him on the *Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore, and he returned to his parents in India, who had meanwhile removed from Bombay to Lahore, where his father was at the head of the most important school of the arts in India. The *Civil and Military Gazette* is the chief journal of northwestern India, owned and conducted by the managers and owners of the Allahabad *Pioneer*, the ablest and most influential of all Indian newspapers published in the interior of the country.

For five years he worked hard and steadily on the *Gazette*. Much of the work was simple drudgery. He shirked nothing. The editor-in-chief was a somewhat grim man. who believed in snubbing his subordinates, and who, though he recognized the talents of the "clever pup," as he called him, and allowed him a pretty free hand in his contributions to the paper, yet was inclined to exact from him the full tale of the heavy routine work of a newspaper office.

But these were happy years. For the youth was

feeling the spring of his own powers, was full of interest in life, was laying up stores of observation and experience, and found in his own home not only domestic happiness, but a sympathy in taste and a variety of talent and accomplishment which acted as a continual stimulus to his own genius. Father, mother, sister, and brother all played and worked together with rare combination of sympathetic gifts. In 1885 some of the verses with the writing of which he and his sister had amused themselves were published at Lahore, in a little volume entitled "Echoes," because most of them were lively parodies on some of the poems of the popular poets of the day. The little book had its moment of narrowly limited success and opened the way for the wider notoriety and success of a volume into which were gathered the "Departmental Ditties" that had appeared from time to time in the *Gazette*. Many of the stories also which were afterward collected under the now familiar title of "Plain Tales from the Hills" made their first appearance in the *Gazette*, and attracted wide attention in the Anglo-Indian community.

Kipling's work for five years at Lahore had indeed been of such quality that it was not surprising that he was called down to Allahabad, in 1887, to take a place upon the editorial staff of the *Pioneer*. The training of an Anglo-Indian journalist is peculiar. He has to master knowledge of many kinds, to become thoroughly acquainted with the affairs of the

English administration and the conditions of Anglo-Indian life, and at the same time with the interests, the modes of life, and thought of the vast underlying native population. The higher positions in Indian journalism are places of genuine importance and of large emolument, worthy objects of ambition for a young man conscious of literary faculty and inspired with zeal for public ends.

The *Pioneer* issued a weekly as well as a daily edition, and in addition to his regular work upon the daily paper, Kipling continued to write for the weekly issue stories similar to those which had already won him reputation, and they now attracted wider attention than ever. His home at Allahabad was with Professor Hill, a man of science attached to the Allahabad College. But the continuity of his life was broken by various journeys undertaken in the interest of the paper — one through Rajputana, from which he wrote a series of descriptive letters, called "Letters of Marque"; another to Calcutta and through Bengal, which resulted in "The City of Dreadful Night" and other letters describing the little-known conditions of the vast presidency; and, finally, in 1889, he was sent off by the *Pioneer* on a tour round the world, on which he was accompanied by his friends, Professor and Mrs. Hill. Going first to Japan, he thence came to America, writing on the way and in America the letters which appeared in the *Pioneer* under the title of "From

Sea to Sea"; and in September, 1889, he arrived in London.

His Indian repute had not preceded him to such degree as to make the way easy for him through the London crowd. But after a somewhat dreary winter, during which he had been making acquaintances and had found irregular employment upon newspapers and magazines, arrangements were made with Messrs. Macmillan & Co. for the publication of an edition of "Plain Tales from the Hills." The book appeared in June. Its success was immediate. It was republished at once in America, and was welcomed as warmly on this side of the Atlantic as on the other. The reprint of Kipling's other Indian stories and of his "Departmental Ditties" speedily followed, together with the new tales and poems which showed the wide range of his creative genius. Each volume was a fresh success; each extended the circle of Mr. Kipling's readers, till now he is the most widely known of English authors.

In 1891 Mr. Kipling left England for a long voyage to South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and Ceylon, and thence to visit his parents at Lahore. On his return to England, he was married in London to Miss Balestier, daughter of the late Mr. Wolcott Balestier of New York. Shortly after their marriage, Mr. and Mrs. Kipling visited Japan, and in August they came to America. They

established their home at Brattleboro, Vermont, where Mrs. Kipling's family had a large estate; and here, in a pleasant and beautifully situated house which they had built for themselves, their two eldest children were born, and here they continued to live till September, 1896.

During these four years Mr. Kipling made three brief visits to England to see his parents, who had left India and were now settled in the old country

The winter ot 1897–98 was spent by Mr. Kipling and his family, accompanied by his father, in South Africa. He was everywhere received with the utmost cordiality and friendliness.

Returning to England in the spring of 1898, he took a house at Rottingdean, near Brighton, with intention to make it his permanent home.

Of the later incidents of his life there is no need to speak.

IV

BAA, BAA, BLACK SHEEP

At the School Council Baa, Baa, Black Sheep was elected to a very high position among the Kipling Stories "because it shows how mean they were to a boy and he did n't need it."

Baa, Baa, Black Sheep,
Have you any wool?
Yes, Sir; yes, Sir; three bags full.
One for the Master, one for the Dame —
None for the Little Boy that cries down the lane.

—*Nursery Rhyme.*

THE FIRST BAG

"When I was in my father's house, I was in a better place."

THEY were putting Punch to bed — the ayah and the hamal, and Meeta, the big Surti boy with the red and gold turban. Judy, already tucked inside her mosquito-curtains, was nearly asleep. Punch had been allowed to stay up for dinner. Many privileges had been accorded to Punch within the last ten days, and a greater kindness from the people of his world had encompassed his ways and works, which were mostly obstreperous. He sat on the edge of his bed and swung his bare legs defiantly.

"Punch-baba going to bye-lo?" said the ayah suggestively.

"No," said Punch. "Punch-baba wants the story about the Ranee that was turned into a tiger. Meeta must tell it, and the hamal shall hide behind the door and make tiger-noises at the proper time."

"But Judy-Baba will wake up," said the ayah.

"Judy-baba is waking, piped a small voice from the mosquito-curtains. "There was a Ranee that lived at Delhi. Go on, Meeta," and she fell asleep again while Meeta began the story.

Never had Punch secured the telling of that tale with so little opposition. He reflected for a long time. The hamal made the tiger-noises in twenty different keys.

"'Top!" said Punch authoritatively. "Why does n't Papa come in and say he is going to give me put-put?"

"Punch-baba is going away," said the ayah. "In another week there will be no Punch-baba to pull my hair any more." She sighed softly, for the boy of the household was very dear to her heart.

"Up the Ghauts in a train?" said Punch, standing on his bed. "All the way to Nassick, where the Ranee-Tiger lives?"

"Not to Nassick this year, little Sahib," said Meeta, lifting him on his shoulder. "Down to the sea where the cocoanuts are thrown, and across the sea in a big ship. Will you take Meeta with you to Belait?"

"You shall all come," said Punch, from the height of Meeta's strong arms. "Meeta and the ayah and the hamal and Bhini-in-the-Garden, and he salaam-Captain-Sahib-snake-man."

There was no mockery in Meeta's voice when he replied — "Great is the Sahib's favour," and laid the little man down in the bed, while the ayah, sitting in the moonlight at the doorway, lulled him to sleep with an interminable canticle such as they sing in the Roman Catholic Church at Parel. Punch curled himself into a ball and slept.

Next morning Judy shouted that there was a rat in the nursery, and thus he forgot to tell her the wonderful news. It did not much matter, for Judy was only three and she would not have understood. But Punch was five; and he knew that going to England would be much nicer than a trip to Nassick.

And Papa and Mamma sold the brougham and the piano, and stripped the house, and curtailed the allowance of crockery for the daily meals, and took long council together over a bundle of letters bearing the Rocklington postmark.

"The worst of it is that one can't be certain of anything," said Papa, pulling his moustache. "The letters in themselves are excellent, and the terms are moderate enough."

"The worst of it is that the children will grow

up away from me," thought Mamma; but she did not say it aloud.

"We are only one case among hundreds," said Papa bitterly. "You shall go Home again in five years, dear."

"Punch will be ten then — and Judy eight. Oh, how long and long and long the time will be! And we have to leave them among strangers."

"Punch is a cheery little chap. He 's sure to make friends wherever he goes."

"And who could help loving my Ju?"

They were standing over the cots in the nursery late at night, and I think that Mamma was crying softly. After Papa had gone away, she knelt down by the side of Judy's cot. The ayah saw her and put up a prayer that the memsahib might never find the love of her children taken away from her and given to a stranger.

Mamma's own prayer was a slightly illogical one. Summarized it ran: "Let strangers love my children and be as good to them as I should be, but let me preserve their love and their confidence for ever and ever. Amen." Punch scratched himself in his sleep, and Judy moaned a little. That seems to be the only answer to the prayer: and, next day, they all went down to the sea, and there was a scene at the Apollo Bunder when Punch discovered that Meeta could not come too, and Judy learned that the ayah must be left behind. But Punch found a

thousand fascinating things in the rope, block, and steam-pipe line on the big P. and O. Steamer, long before Meeta and the ayah had dried their tears.

"Come back, Punch-baba," said the ayah.

"Come back," said Meeta, "and be a Burra Sahib.

"Yes," said Punch, lifted up in his father's arms to wave good-bye. "Yes, I will come back, and I will be a Burra Sahib Bahadur!"

At the end of the first day Punch demanded to be set down in England, which he was certain must be close at hand. Next day there was a merry breeze, and Punch was very sick. "When I come back to Bombay," said Punch on his recovery, "I will come by the road — in a broom-gharri. This is a very naughty ship."

The Swedish boatswain consoled him, and he modified his opinions as the voyage went on. There was so much to see and to handle and ask questions about that Punch nearly forgot the ayah and Meeta and the hamal, and with difficulty remembered a few words of the Hindustani once his second-speech.

But Judy was much worse. The day before the steamer reached Southampton, Mamma asked her if she would not like to see the ayah again. Judy's blue eyes turned to the stretch of sea that had swallowed all her tiny past, and she said: "Ayah! What ayah?"

Mamma cried over her, and Punch marveled. It was then that he heard for the first time Mamma's passionate appeal to him never to let Judy forget Mamma. Seeing that Judy was young, ridiculously young, and that Mamma, every evening for four weeks past, had come into the cabin to sing her and Punch to sleep with a mysterious tune that he called "Sonny, my soul," Punch could not understand what Mamma meant. But he strove to do his duty, for the moment Mamma left the cabin, he said to Judy: "Ju, you bemember Mamma?"

"'Torse I do," said Judy.

"Then always bemember Mamma, 'r else I won't give you the paper ducks that the red-haired Captain Sahib cut out for me."

So Judy promised always to "bemember Mamma."

Many and many a time was Mamma's command laid upon Punch, and Papa would say the same thing with an insistence that awed the child.

"You must make haste and learn to write, Punch," said Papa, "and then you 'll be able to write letters to us in Bombay."

"I 'll come into your room," said Punch, and Papa choked.

Papa and Mamma were always choking in those days. If Punch took Judy to task for not "bemembering," they choked. If Punch sprawled on

the sofa in the Southampton lodging-house and sketched his future in purple and gold, they choked; and so they did if Judy put up her mouth for a kiss.

Through many days all four were vagabonds on the face of the earth: Punch with no one to give orders to, Judy too young for anything, and Papa and Mamma grave, distracted, and choking.

"Where," demanded Punch, wearied of a loathsome contrivance on four wheels with a mound of luggage atop — "where is our broom-gharri? This thing talks so much that I can't talk. Where is our own broom-gharri? When I was at Band-stand before we comed away, I asked Inverarity Sahib why he was sitting in it, and he said it was his own. And I said, 'I will give it you' — I like Inverarity Sahib — and I said, 'Can you put your legs through the pully-wag loops by the windows? And Inverarity Sahib said No, and laughed. I can put my legs through the pully-wag loops. I can put my legs through these pully-wag loops. Look! Oh, Mamma's crying again! I did n't know. I was n't not to do so."

Punch drew his legs out of the loops of the four-wheeler: the door opened and he slid to the earth, in a cascade of parcels, at the door of an austere little villa whose gates bore the legend "Downe Lodge." Punch gathered himself together and eyed the house with disfavour. It stood on a sandy

road, and a cold wind tickled his knickerbockered legs.

"Let us go away," said Punch. "This is not a pretty place."

But Mamma and Papa and Judy had quitted the cab, and all the luggage was being taken into the house. At the doorstep stood a woman in black, and she smiled largely, with dry chapped lips. Behind her was a man, big, bony, gray, and lame as to one leg — behind him a boy of twelve, black-haired and oily in appearance. Punch surveyed the trio, and advanced without fear, as he had been accustomed to do in Bombay when callers came and he happened to be playing in the veranda.

"How do you do?" said he. "I am Punch." But they were all looking at the luggage — all except the gray man, who shook hands with Punch and said he was a "smart little fellow." There was much running about and banging of boxes, and Punch curled himself up on the sofa in the dining-room and considered things.

"I don't like these people," said Punch. "But never mind. We 'll go away soon. We have always went away soon from everywhere. I wish we was gone back to Bombay soon."

The wish bore no fruit. For six days Mamma wept at intervals, and showed the woman in black all Punch's clothes — a liberty which Punch resented. "But p'raps she 's a new white ayah," he

thought. "I 'm to call her Antirosa, but she does n't call me Sahib. She says just Punch," he confided to Judy. "What is Antirosa?"

Judy did n't know. Neither she nor Punch had heard anything of an animal called an aunt. Their world had been Papa and Mamma, who knew everything, permitted everything, and loved everybody — even Punch when he used to go into the garden at Bombay and fill his nails with mold after the weekly nail-cutting, because, as he explained between two strokes of the slipper to his sorely tried Father, his fingers "felt so new at the ends."

In an undefined way Punch judged it advisable to keep both parents between himself and the woman in black and the boy in black hair. He did not approve of them. He liked the gray man, who had expressed a wish to be called "Uncleharri." They nodded at each other when they met, and the gray man showed him a little ship with rigging that took up and down.

"She is a model of the *Brisk* — the little *Brisk* that was sore exposed that day at Navarino." The gray man hummed the last words and fell into a reverie. "I 'll tell you about Navarino, Punch, when we go for walks together; and you must n't touch the ship, because she 's the *Brisk*."

Long before that walk, the first of many, was taken, they roused Punch and Judy in the chill dawn of a February morning to say Good-bye; and

of all people in the wide earth to Papa and Mamma — both crying this time. Punch was very sleepy and Judy was cross.

"Don't forget us," pleaded Mamma. "Oh, my little son, don't forget us, and see that Judy remembers too."

"I 've told Judy to bemember," said Punch, wiggling, for his father's beard tickled his neck. "I 've told Judy — ten — forty — 'leven thousand times. But Ju 's so young — quite a baby — is n't she?"

"Yes," said Papa, "Quite a baby, and you must be good to Judy, and make haste to learn to write and — and — and ——"

Punch was back in his bed again. Judy was fast asleep, and there was the rattle of a cab below. Papa and Mamma had gone away. Not to Nassick; that was across the sea. To some place much nearer, of course, and equally of course they would return. They came back after dinner-parties, and Papa had come back after he had been to a place called "The Snows," and Mamma with him, to Punch and Judy at Mrs. Inverarity's house in Marine Lines. Assuredly they would come back again. So Punch fell asleep till the true morning, when the black-haired boy met him with the information that Papa and Mamma had gone to Bombay, and that he and Judy were to stay at Downe Lodge "forever." Antirosa, tearfully ap-

pealed to for a contradiction, said that Harry had spoken the truth, and that it behooved Punch to fold up his clothes neatly on going to bed. Punch went out and wept bitterly with Judy, into whose fair head he had driven some ideas of the meaning of separation.

When a matured man discovers that he has been deserted by Providence, deprived of his God, and cast without help, comfort, or sympathy, upon a world which is new and strange to him, his despair, which may find expression in evil-living, the writing of his experiences, or the more satisfactory diversion of suicide, is generally supposed to be impressive. A child, under exactly similar circumstances as far as its knowledge goes, cannot very well curse God and die. It howls till its nose is red, its eyes are sore, and its head aches. Punch and Judy, through no fault of their own, had lost all their world. They sat in the hall and cried; the black-haired boy looking on from afar.

The model of the ship availed nothing, though the gray man assured Punch that he might pull the rigging up and down as much as he pleased; and Judy was promised free entry into the kitchen. They wanted Papa and Mamma, gone to Bombay beyond the seas, and their grief while it lasted was without remedy.

When the tears ceased the house was very still. Antirosa had decided it was better to let the

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children "have their cry out," and the boy had gone to school. Punch raised his head from the floor and sniffed mournfully. Judy was nearly asleep. Three short years had not taught her how to bear sorrow with full knowledge. There was a distant, dull boom in the air — a repeated heavy thud. Punch knew that sound in Bombay in the Monsoon. It was the sea — the sea that must be traversed before anyone could get to Bombay.

"Quick, Ju!" he cried, "we 're close to the sea. I can hear it! Listen! That 's where they 've went. P'raps we can catch them if we was in time. They did n't mean to go without us. They 've only forgot."

"Iss," said Judy. "They 've only forgotted. Less go to the sea."

The hall-door was open and so was the garden-gate.

"It 's very, very big, this place," he said, looking cautiously down the road, "and we will get lost; but I will find a man and order him to take me back to my house — like I did in Bombay."

He took Judy by the hand, and the two fled hatless in the direction of the sound of the sea. Downe Villa was almost the last of a range of newly built houses running out, through a chaos of brick-mounds, to a heath where gypsies occasionally camped and where the Garrison Artillery of Rocklington practised. There were few people to be seen, and the children might have been taken for those of the soldiery, who ranged far. Half an

hour the wearied little legs tramped across heath, potato-field, and sand-dune.

"I 'se so tired," said Judy, "and Mamma will be angry."

"Mamma 's never angry. I suppose she is waiting at the sea now while Papa gets tickets. We 'll find them and go along with them. Ju, you must n't sit down. Only a little more and we 'll come to the sea. Ju, if you sit down I 'll thmack you!" said Punch.

They climbed another dune, and came upon the great gray sea at low tide. Hundreds of crabs were scuttling about the beach, but there was no trace of Papa and Mamma not even of a ship upon the waters — nothing but sand and mud for miles and miles.

And "Uncleharri" found them by chance — very muddy and very forlorn — Punch dissolved in tears, but trying to divert Judy with an "ickle trab," and Judy wailing to the pitiless horizon for "Mamma, Mamma!" — and again "Mamma!"

THE SECOND BAG

Ah, well-a-day, for we are souls bereaved!
Of all the creatures under Heaven's wide scope
We are most hopeless, who had once most hope,
And most beliefless, who had most believed.
—*The City of Dreadful Night.*

All this time not a word about Black Sheep. He came later, and Harry, the black-haired boy, was mainly responsible for his coming. Judy

— who could help loving little Judy? — passed, by special permit, into the kitchen and thence straight to Aunty Rosa's heart. Harry was Aunty Rosa's one child, and Punch was the extra boy about the house. There was no special place for him or his little affairs, and he was forbidden to sprawl on sofas and explain his ideas about the manufacture of this world and his hopes for his future. Sprawling was lazy and wore out sofas, and little boys were not expected to talk. They were talked to, and the talking to was intended for the benefit of their morals. As the unquestioned despot of the house at Bombay, Punch could not quite understand how he came to be of no account in this new life.

Harry might reach across the table and take what he wanted; Judy might point and get what she wanted. Punch was forbidden to do either. The gray man was his great hope and stand-by for many months after Mamma and Papa left, and he had forgotten to tell Judy to "bemember Mamma."

This lapse was excusable, because in the interval he had been introduced by Aunty Rosa to two very impressive things — an abstraction called God, the intimate friend and ally of Aunty Rosa, generally believed to live behind the kitchen-range because it was hot there — and a dirty brown book filled with unintelligible dots and marks. Punch was always anxious to oblige everybody. He, there-

fore, welded the story of the Creation on to what he could recollect of his Indian fairy tales, and scandalized Aunty Rosa by repeating the result to Judy. It was a sin, a grievous sin, and Punch was talked to for a quarter of an hour. He could not understand where the iniquity came in, but was careful not to repeat the offence, because Aunty Rosa told him that God had heard every word he had said and was very angry. If this were true why did n't God come and say so, thought Punch, and dismissed the matter from his mind. Afterward he learned to know the Lord as the only thing in the world more awful than Aunty Rosa — as a Creature that stood in the background and counted the strokes of the cane.

But the reading was, just then, a much more serious matter than any creed. Aunty Rosa sat him upon a table and told him that A B meant ab.

"Why?" said Punch. "A is a and B is bee. Why does A B mean ab?"

"Because I tell you it does," said Aunty Rosa, "and you 've got to say it."

Punch said it accordingly, and for a month, hugely against his will, stumbled through the brown book, not in the least comprehending what it meant. But Uncle Harry, who walked much and generally alone, was wont to come into the nursery and suggest to Aunty Rosa that Punch should walk with him. He seldom spoke, but he showed

Punch all Rocklington, from the mud-banks and the sand of the back-bay to the great harbours where ships lay at anchor, and the dockyards where the hammers were never still, and the marine-store shops, and the shiny brass counters in the Offices where Uncle Harry went once every three months with a slip of blue paper and received sovereigns in exchange; for he held a wound-pension. Punch heard, too, from his lips the story of the battle of Navarino, where the sailors of the Fleet, for three days afterward, were deaf as posts and could only sign to each other. "That was because of the noise of the guns," said Uncle Harry, "and I have got the wadding of a bullet somewhere inside me now."

Punch regarded him with curiosity. He had not the least idea what wadding was, and his notion of a bullet was a dockyard cannon-ball bigger than his own head. How could Uncle Harry keep a cannon-ball inside him? He was ashamed to ask, for fear Uncle Harry might be angry.

Punch had never known what anger — real anger — meant until one terrible day when Harry had taken his paint-box to paint a boat with, and Punch had protested with a loud and lamentable voice. Then Uncle Harry had appeared on the scene and, muttering something about "strangers' children," had with a stick smitten the black-haired boy across the shoulders till he wept and yelled, and

Aunty Rosa came in and abused Uncle Harry for cruelty to his own flesh and blood, and Punch shuddered to the tips of his shoes. "It was n't my fault," he explained to the boy, but both Harry and Aunty Rosa said that it was, and that Punch had told tales, and for a week there were no more walks with Uncle Harry.

But that week brought a great joy to Punch.

He had repeated till he was thrice weary the statement that "the Cat lay on the Mat and the Rat came in."

"Now I can truly read," said Punch, "and now I will never read anything in the world."

He put the brown book in the cupboard where his school-books lived and accidentally tumbled out a venerable volume, without covers, labelled *Sharpe's Magazine*. There was the most portentous picture of a Griffin on the first page, with verses below. The Griffin carried off one sheep a day from a German village, till a man came with a "falchion" and split the Griffin open. Goodness only knew what a falchion was, but there was the Griffin, and his history was an improvement upon the eternal Cat.

"This," said Punch, "means things, and now I will know all about everything in all the world." He read till the light failed, not understanding a tithe of the meaning, but tantalized by glimpses of new worlds hereafter to be revealed.

"What is a 'falchion'? What is a 'e-wee lamb'? What is a 'base ussurper'? What is a 'verdant me-ad'? he demanded, with flushed cheeks, at bedtime, of the astonished Aunt Rosa.

"Say your prayers and go to sleep," she replied, and that was all the help Punch then or afterward found at her hands in the new and delightful exercise of reading.

"Aunt Rosa only knows about God and things like that," argued Punch. "Uncle Harry will tell me."

The next walk proved that Uncle Harry could not help either; but he allowed Punch to talk, and even sat down on a bench to hear about the Griffin. Other walks brought other stories as Punch ranged farther afield, for the house held large store of old books that no one ever opened — from Frank Fairlegh in serial numbers, and the earlier poems of Tennyson, contributed anonymously to *Sharpe's Magazine*, to '62 Exhibition Catalogues, gay with colours and delighftully incomprehensible, and odd leaves of "Gulliver's Travels."

As soon as Punch could string a few pot-hooks together, he wrote to Bombay, demanding by return of post "all the books in all the world." Papa could not comply with this modest indent, but sent "Grimm's Fairy Tales and a "Hans Andersen." That was enough. If he were only left alone Punch could pass, at any hour he chose, into a land of his

own, beyond reach of Aunty Rosa and her God, Harry and his teasements, and Judy's claims to be played with.

"Don't disturb me, I 'm reading. Go and play in the kitchen," grunted Punch. "Aunty Rosa lets you go there." Judy was cutting her second teeth and was fretful. She appealed to Aunty Rosa, who descended on Punch.

"I was reading," he explained, "reading a book. I want to read."

"You 're only doing that to show off," said Aunty Rosa. "But we 'll see. Play with Judy now, and don't open a book for a week."

Judy did not pass a very enjoyable playtime with Punch, who was consumed with indignation. There was a pettiness at the bottom of the prohibition which puzzled him.

"It 's what I like to do," he said, "and she 's found out that and stopped me. Don't cry, Ju — it was n't your fault — please don't cry, or she 'll say I made you."

Ju loyally mopped up her tears, and the two played in their nursery, a room in the basement and half underground, to which they were regularly sent after the midday dinner while Aunty Rosa slept. She drank wine — that is to say, something from a bottle in the cellaret — for her stomach's sake, but if she did not fall asleep she would sometimes come into the nursery to see that the children

were really playing. Now bricks, wooden hoops, ninepins, and chinaware cannot amuse forever, especially when all Fairyland is to be won by the mere opening of a book, and, as often as not, Punch would be discovered reading to Judy or tell-her interminable tales. That was an offence in the eyes of the law, and Judy would be whisked off by Aunty Rosa, while Punch was left to play alone, "and be sure that I hear you doing it."

It was not a cheering employ, for he had to make a playful noise. At last, with infinite craft, he devised an arrangement whereby the table could be supported as to three legs on toy bricks, leaving the fourth clear to bring down on the floor. He could work the table with one hand and hold a book with the other. This he did till an evil day when Aunty Rosa pounced upon him unawares and told him that he was "acting a lie."

"If you 're old enough to do that," she said —her temper was always worst after dinner — "you 're old enough to be beaten."

"But — I 'm — I 'm not a animal!" said Punch, aghast. He remembered Uncle Harry and the stick, and turned white. Aunty Rosa had hidden a light cane behind her, and Punch was beaten then and there over the shoulders. It was a revelation to him. The room door was shut, and he was left to weep himself into repentance and work out his own Gospel of Life.

Aunty Rosa, he argued, had the power to beat him with many stripes. It was unjust and cruel and Mamma and Papa would never have allowed it. Unless perhaps, as Aunty Rosa seemed to imply, they had sent secret orders. In which case he was abandoned indeed. It would be discreet in the future to propitiate Aunty Rosa, but, then, again, even in matters in which he was innocent, he had been accused of wishing to "show off." He had "shown off" before visitors when he had attacked a strange gentleman — Harry's uncle, not his own — with requests for information about the Griffin and the falchion, and the precise nature of the Tilbury in which Frank Fairlegh rode — all points of paramount interest which he was bursting to understand. Clearly it would not do to pretend to care for Aunty Rosa.

At this point Harry entered and stood afar off, eying Punch, a disheveled heap in the corner of the room, with disgust.

"You 're a liar — a young liar," said Harry, with great unction, "and you 're to have tea down here because you 're not fit to speak to us. And you 're not to speak to Judy again till Mother gives you leave. You 'll corrupt her. You 're only fit to associate with the servant. Mother says so."

Having reduced Punch to a second agony of tears Harry departed up-stairs with the news that Punch was still rebellious.

Uncle Harry sat uneasily in the dining-room. "D—— it all, Rosa," said he at last, "can't you leave the child alone? He 's a good enough little chap when I meet him."

"He puts on his best manners with you, Henry," said Aunty Rosa, "but I 'm afraid, I 'm very much afraid, that he is the Black Sheep of the family."

Harry heard and stored up the name for future use. Judy cried till she was bidden to stop, her brother not being worth tears; and the evening concluded with the return of Punch to the upper regions and a private sitting at which all the blinding horrors of Hell were revealed to Punch with such store of imagery as Aunty Rosa's narrow mind possessed.

Most grievous of all was Judy's round-eyed reproach, and Punch went to bed in the depths of the Valley of Humiliation. He shared his room with Harry and knew the torture in store. For an hour and a half he had to answer that young gentleman's question as to his motives for telling a lie, and a grievous lie, the precise quantity of punishment inflicted by Aunty Rosa, and had also to profess his deep gratitude for such religious instruction as Harry thought fit to impart.

From that day began the downfall of Punch, now Black Sheep.

"Untrustworthy in one thing, untrustworthy in all," said Aunty Rosa, and Harry felt that Black

Sheep was delivered into his hands. He would wake him up in the night to ask him why he was such a liar.

"I don't know," Punch would reply.

"Then don't you think you ought to get up and pray to God for a new heart?"

"Y-yess."

"Get out and pray, then!" And Punch would get out of bed with raging hate in his heart against all the world, seen and unseen. He was always tumbling into trouble. Harry had a knack of cross-examining him as to his day's doings, which seldom failed to lead him, sleepy and savage, into half a dozen contradictions — all duly reported to Aunty Rosa next morning.

"But it was n't a lie," Punch would begin, charging into a laboured explanation that landed him more hopelessly in the mire. "I said that I did n't say my prayers twice over in the day, and that was on Tuesday. Once I did, I know I did, but Harry said I did n't," and so forth, till the tension brought tears, and he was dismissed from the table in disgrace.

"You use n't to be as bad as this?" said Judy, awe-stricken at the catalogue of Black Sheep's crimes. "Why are you so bad now?"

"I don't know," Black Sheep would reply. "I 'm not, if I only was n't bothered upside down. I knew what I did, and I want to say so; but Harry

always makes it out different somehow, and Aunty Rosa does n't believe a word I say. Oh, Ju! don't you say I 'm bad too."

"Aunty Rosa says you are," said Judy. "She told the Vicar so when he came yesterday."

"Why does she tell all the people outside the house about me? It is n't fair," said Black Sheep. "When I was in Bombay, and was bad — doing bad, not made-up bad like this — Mamma told Papa, and Papa told me he knew, and that was all. Outside people did n't know too — even Meeta did n't know."

"I don't remember," said Judy wistfully. "I was all little then. Mamma was just as fond of you as she was of me, was n't she?"

"'Course she was. So was Papa. So was everybody."

"Aunty Rosa likes me more than she does you. She says that you are a Trial and a Black Sheep, and I 'm not to speak to you more than I can help."

"Always? Not outside of the times when you must n't speak to me at all?"

Judy nodded her head mournfully. Black Sheep turned away in despair, but Judy's arms were round his neck.

"Never mind, Punch," she whispered. "I will speak to you just the same as ever and ever. You 're my own, own brother though you are — though Aunty Rosa says you 're Bad, and Harry

says you 're a little coward. He says that if I pulled your hair hard, you 'd cry."

"Pull, then," said Punch.

Judy pulled gingerly.

"Pull harder — as hard as you can! There! I don't mind how much you pull it now. If you 'll speak to me same as ever I 'll let you pull it as much as you like — pull it out if you like. But I know if Harry came and stood by and made you do it I 'd cry."

So the two children sealed the compact with a kiss, and Black Sheep's heart was cheered within him, and by extreme caution and careful avoidance of Harry he acquired virtue and was allowed to read undisturbed for a week. Uncle Harry took him for walks and consoled him with rough tenderness, never calling him Black Sheep. "It 's good for you, I suppose, Punch," he used to say. "Let us sit down. I 'm getting tired." His steps led him now not to the beach, but to the Cemetery of Rocklington, amid the potato-fields. For hours the gray man would sit on a tombstone, while Black Sheep read epitaphs, and then with a sigh would stump home again.

"I shall lie there soon," said he to Black Sheep, one winter evening, when his face showed white as a worn silver coin under the lights of the chapel-lodge. "You need n't tell Aunty Rosa."

A month later, he turned sharp round, ere half a

morning walk was completed, and stumped back to the house. "Put me to bed, Rosa," he muttered. "I 've walked my last. The wadding has found me out."

They put him to bed, and for a fortnight the shadow of his sickness lay upon the house, and Black Sheep went to and fro unobserved. Papa had sent him some new books, and he was told to keep quiet. He retired into his own world, and was perfectly happy. Even at night his felicity was unbroken. He could lie in bed and string himself tales of travel and adventure while Harry was downstairs.

"Uncle Harry 's going to die," said Judy, who now lived almost entirely with Aunty Rosa.

"I 'm very sorry," said Black Sheep soberly. "He told me that a long time ago."

Aunty Rosa heard the conversation. "Will nothing check your wicked tongue?" she said angrily. There were blue circles round her eyes.

Black Sheep retreated to the nursery and read "Cometh up as a Flower" with deep and uncomprehending interest. He had been forbidden to read it on account of its "sinfulness," but the bonds of the Universe were crumbling, and Aunty Rosa was in great grief.

"I 'm glad," said Black Sheep. "She 's unhappy now. It was n't a lie, though. I knew. He told me not to tell."

That night Black Sheep woke with a start. Harry was not in the room, and there was a sound of sobbing on the next floor. Then the voice of Uncle Harry, singing the song of the Battle of Navarino, cut through the darkness:

> "Our vanship was the Asia —
> The Albion and Genoa!"

"He 's getting well," thought Black Sheep, who knew the song through all its seventeen verses. But the blood froze at his little heart as he thought. The voice leapt an octave and rang shrill as a boatswain's pipe:

> "And next came on the lovely Rose,
> The Philomel, her fire-ship, closed,
> And the Little Brisk was sore exposed
> That day at Navarino."

"That day at Navarino, Uncle Harry!" shouted Black Sheep, half wild with excitement and fear of he knew not what.

A door opened and Aunty Rosa screamed up the staircase: "Hush! For God's sake hush, you little devil. Uncle Harry is dead!"

THE THIRD BAG

> Journeys end in lovers' meeting,
> Every wise man's son doth know.

"I wonder what will happen to me now," thought Black Sheep, when the semi-pagan rites

peculiar to the burial of the Dead in middle-class houses had been accomplished, and Aunty Rosa, awful in black crape, had returned to this life. "I don't think I 've done anything bad that she knows of. I suppose I will soon. She will be very cross after Uncle Harry's dying, and Harry will be cross too. I 'll keep in the nursery."

Unfortunately for Punch's plans, it was decided that he should be sent to a day-school which Harry attended. This meant a morning walk with Harry, and perhaps an evening one; but the prospect of freedom in the interval was refreshing. "Harry 'll tell everything I do, but I won't do anything," said Black Sheep. Fortified with this virtuous resolution, he went to school only to find that Harry's version of his character had preceded him, and that life was a burden in consequence. He took stock of his associates. Some of them were unclean, some of them talked in dialect, many dropped their h's, and there were two Jews and a Negro, or someone quite as dark, in the assembly. "That 's a hubshi," said Black Sheep to himself. "Even Meeta used to laugh at a hubshi. I don't think this is a proper place." He was indignant for at least an hour, till he reflected that any expostulation on his part would be by Aunty Rosa construed into "showing off," and that Harry would tell the boys.

"How do you like school?" said Aunty Rosa at the end of the day.

"I think it is a very nice place," said Punch quietly.

"I suppose you warned the boys of Black Sheep's character?" said Aunty Rosa to Harry.

"Oh, yes!" said the censor of Black Sheep's morals. "They know all about him."

"If I was with my father," said Black Sheep, stung to the quick, "I should n't speak to those boys. He would n't let me. They live in shops. I saw them go into shops — where their fathers live and sell things."

"You 're too good for that school, are you?" said Aunty Rosa, with a bitter smile. "You ought to be grateful, Black Sheep, that those boys speak to you at all. It is n't every school that takes little liars."

Harry did not fail to make much capital out of Black Sheep's ill-considered remark; with the result that several boys, including the hubshi, demonstrated to Black Sheep the eternal equality of the human race by smacking his head, and his consolation from Aunty Rosa was that it "served him right for being vain." He learned, however, to keep his opinions to himself, and by propitiating Harry in carrying books and the like to secure a little peace. His existence was not too joyful. From nine till twelve he was at school, and from two to four, except on Saturdays. In the evenings he was sent down into the nursery to prepare

his lessons for the next day, and every night came the dreaded cross-questionings at Harry's hand. Of Judy he saw but little. She was deeply religious — at six years of age Religion is easy to come by — and sorely divided between her natural love for Black Sheep and her love for Aunty Rosa, who could do no wrong.

The lean woman returned that love with interest, and Judy, when she dared, took advantage of this for the remission of Black Sheep's penalties. Failures in lessons at school were furnished at home by a week without reading other than schoolbooks, and Harry brought the news of such a failure with glee. Further, Black Sheep was then bound to repeat his lessons at bedtime to Harry, who generally succeeded in making him break down, and consoled him by gloomiest forebodings for the morrow. Harry was at once spy, practical joker, inquisitor, and Aunty Rosa's deputy executioner. He filled his many posts to admiration. From his actions, now that Uncle Harry was dead, there was no appeal. Black Sheep had not been permitted to keep any self-respect at school; at home he was of course utterly discredited, and grateful for any pity that the servant-girls — they changed frequently at Downe Lodge because they, too, were liars — might show. "You 're just fit to row in the same boat with Black Sheep," was a sentiment that each new Jane or Eliza might expect to hear,

before a month was over, from Aunty Rosa's lips; and Black Sheep was used to ask new girls whether they had yet been compared to him. Harry was "Master Harry" in their mouths; Judy was officially "Miss Judy"; but Black Sheep was never anything more than Black Sheep *tout court.*

As time went on and the memory of Papa and Mamma became wholly overlaid by the unpleasant task of writing them letters under Aunty Rosa's eye, each Sunday, Black Sheep forgot what manner of life he had led in the beginning of things. Even Judy's appeals to "try and remember about Bombay" failed to quicken him.

"I can't remember," he said. "I know I used to give orders and Mamma kissed me."

"Aunty Rosa will kiss you if you are good," pleaded Judy.

"Ugh! I don't want to be kissed by Aunty Rosa. She 'd say I was doing it to get something more to eat."

The weeks lengthened into months, and the holidays came; but just before the holidays Black Sheep fell into deadly sin.

Among the many boys whom Harry had incited to "punch Black Sheep's head because he dare n't hit back," was one more aggravating than the rest, who, in an unlucky moment, fell upon Black Sheep when Harry was not near. The blows stung, and Black Sheep struck back at random with all the

power at his command. The boy dropped and whimpered. Black Sheep was astounded at his own act, but, feeling the unresisting body under him, shook it with both his hands in blind fury and then began to throttle his enemy; meaning honestly to slay him. There was a scuffle, and Black Sheep was torn off the body by Harry and some colleagues, and cuffed home tingling but exultant. Aunty Rosa was out; pending her arrival Harry set himself to lecture Black Sheep on the sin of murder — which he described as the offence of Cain.

"Why did n't you fight him fair? What did you hit him when he was down for, you little cur?"

Black Sheep looked up at Harry's throat and then at a knife on the dinner-table.

"I don't understand," he said wearily. "You always set him on me and told me I was a coward when I blubbed. Will you leave me alone until Aunty Rosa comes in? She 'll beat me if you tell her I ought to be beaten; so it 's all right."

"It 's all wrong," said Harry magisterially. "You nearly killed him, and I should n't wonder if he dies."

"Will he die?" said Black Sheep.

"I daresay," said Harry, "and then you 'll be hanged."

"All right," said Black Sheep, possessing himself of the table-knife. "Then I 'll kill you now. You say things and do things and — and I don't

know how things happen, and you never leave me alone — and I don't care what happens!"

He ran at the boy with the knife, and Harry fled upstairs to his room, promising Black Sheep the finest thrashing in the world when Aunty Rosa returned. Black Sheep sat at the bottom of the stairs, the table-knife in his hand, and wept for that he had not killed Harry. The servant-girl came up from the kitchen, took the knife away, and consoled him. But Black Sheep was beyond consolation. He would be badly beaten by Aunty Rosa; then there would be another beating at Harry's hands; then Judy would not be allowed to speak to him; then the tale would be told at school and then ——

There was no one to help and no one to care, and the best way out of the business was by death. A knife would hurt, but Aunty Rosa had told him, a year ago, that if he sucked paint he would die. He went into the nursery, unearthed the now-disused Noah's Ark, and sucked the paint off as many animals as remained. It tasted abominable, but he had licked Noah's Dove clean by the time Aunty Rosa and Judy returned. He went upstairs and greeted them with: "Please, Aunty Rosa, I believe I 've nearly killed a boy at school, and I 've tried to kill Harry, and when you 've done all about God and Hell, will you beat me and get it over?"

The tale of the assault as told by Harry could

only be explained on the ground of possession by the Devil. Wherefore Black Sheep was not only most excellently beaten, once by Aunty Rosa and once, when thoroughly cowed down, by Harry, but he was further prayed for at family prayers, together with Jane, who had stolen a cold rissole from the pantry and snuffled audibly as her enormity was brought before the Throne of Grace. Black Sheep was sore and stiff, but triumphant. He would die that very night and be rid of them all. No, he would ask for no forgiveness from Harry, and at bedtime would stand no questioning at Harry's hands, even though addressed as "Young Cain."

"I 've been beaten," said he, "and I 've done other things. I don't care what I do. If you speak to me to-night, Harry, I 'll get out and try to kill you. Now you can kill me if you like."

Harry took his bed into the spare-room, and Black Sheep lay down to die.

It may be that the makers of Noah's Arks know that their animals are likely to find their way into young mouths, and paint them accordingly. Certain it is that the common, weary next morning broke through the windows and found Black Sheep quite well and a good deal ashamed of himself, but richer by the knowledge that he could, in extremity, secure himself against Harry for the future.

When he descended to breakfast on the first day of the holidays, he was greeted with the news that Harry, Aunty Rosa, and Judy were going away to Brighton, while Black Sheep was to stay in the house with the servant. His latest outbreak suited Aunty Rosa's plans admirably. It gave her good excuse for leaving the extra boy behind. Papa in Bombay, who really seemed to know a young sinner's wants to the hour, sent, that week, a package of new books. And with these, and the society of Jane on board-wages, Black Sheep was left alone for a month.

The books lasted for ten days. They were eaten too quickly, in long gulps of four-and-twenty hours at a time. Then came days of doing absolutely nothing, of dreaming dreams and marching imaginary armies up and down stairs, of counting the number of banisters, and of measuring the length and breadth of every room in handspans — fifty down the side, thirty across, and fifty back again. Jane made many friends, and, after receiving Black Sheep's assurance that he would not tell of her absences, went out daily for long hours. Black Sheep would follow the rays of the sinking sun from the kitchen to the dining-room and thence upward to his own bedroom until all was gray dark, and he ran down to the kitchen fire and read by its light. He was happy in that he was left alone and could read as much as he pleased. But, later, he

grew afraid of the shadows of window-curtains and the flapping of doors and the creaking of shutters. He went out into the garden, and the rustling of the laurel-bushes frightened him.

He was glad when they all returned — Aunty Rosa, Harry, and Judy — full of news, and Judy laden with gifts. Who could help loving loyal little Judy? In return for all her merry babblement, Black Sheep confided to her that the distance from the hall-door to the top of the first landing was exactly one hundred and eighty-four handspans. He had found it out himself.

Then the old life recommenced; but with a difference, and a new sin. To his other iniquities Black Sheep had now added a phenomenal clumsiness — was as unfit to trust in action as he was in word. He himself could not account for spilling everything he touched, upsetting glasses as he put his hand out, and bumping his head against doors that were manifestly shut. There was a gray haze upon all his world, and it narrowed month by month, until at last it left Black Sheep almost alone with the flapping curtains that were so like ghosts, and the nameless terrors of broad daylight that were only coats on pegs after all.

Holidays came and holidays went, and Black Sheep was taken to see many people whose faces were all exactly alike; was beaten when occasion demanded, and tortured by Harry on all possible

occasions; but defended by Judy through good and evil report, though she hereby drew upon herself the wrath of Aunty Rosa.

The weeks were interminable and Papa and Mamma were clean forgotten. Harry had left school and was a clerk in a Banking-Office. Freed from his presence, Black Sheep resolved that he should no longer be deprived of his allowance of pleasure-reading. Consequently, when he failed at school he reported that all was well, and conceived a large contempt for Aunty Rosa as he saw how easy it was to deceive her. "She says I 'm a little liar when I don't tell lies, and now I do, she does n't know," thought Black Sheep. Aunty Rosa had credited him in the past with petty cunning and stratagem that had never entered into his head. By the light of the sordid knowledge that she had revealed to him he paid her back full tale. In a household where the most innocent of his motives, his natural yearning for a little affection, had been interpreted into a desire for more bread and jam or to ingratiate himself with strangers and so put Harry into the background, his work was easy. Aunty Rosa could penetrate certain kinds of hypocrisy, but not all. He set his child's wits against hers and was no more beaten. It grew monthly more and more of a trouble to read the schoolbooks, and even the pages of the open-print story-books danced and were dim. So Black

Sheep brooded in the shadows that fell about him and cut him off from the world, inventing horrible punishments for "dear Harry," or plotting another line of the tangled web of deception that he wrapped round Aunty Rosa.

Then the crash came and the cobwebs were broken. It was impossible to foresee everything. Aunty Rosa made personal inquiries as to Black Sheep's progress and received information that startled her. Step by step, with a delight as keen as when she convicted an underfed housemaid of the theft of cold meats, she followed the trail of Black Sheep's delinquencies. For weeks and weeks, in order to escape banishment from the book-shelves, he had made a fool of Aunty Rosa, of Harry, of God, of all the world. Horrible, most horrible, and evidence of an utterly depraved mind.

Black Sheep counted the cost. "It will only be one big beating, and then she 'll put a card with 'Liar' on my back, same as she did before. Harry will whack me and pray for me, and she will pray for me at prayers and tell me I 'm a Child of the Devil and give me hymns to learn. But I 've done all my reading and she never knew. She 'll say she knew all along. She 's an old liar, too," said he.

For three days Black Sheep was shut in his own bedroom — to prepare his heart. "That means two beatings. One at school and one here. That

one will hurt most." And it fell even as he thought. He was thrashed at school before the Jews and the hubshi, for the heinous crime of bringing home false reports of progress. He was thrashed at home by Aunty Rosa on the same count, and then the placard was produced. Aunty Rosa stitched it between his shoulders and bade him go for a walk with it upon him.

"If you make me do that," said Black Sheep very quietly, "I shall burn this house down, and perhaps I 'll kill you. I don't know whether I can kill you — you 're so bony — but I 'll try."

No punishment followed this blasphemy, though Black Sheep held himself ready to work his way to Aunty Rosa's withered throat, and grip there till he was beaten off. Perhaps Aunty Rosa was afraid, for Black Sheep, having reached the Nadir of Sin, bore himself with a new recklessness.

In the midst of all the trouble there came a visitor from over the seas to Downe Lodge, who knew Papa and Mamma, and was commissioned to see Punch and Judy. Black Sheep was sent to the drawing-room and charged into a solid tea-table laden with china.

"Gently, gently, little man," said the visitor, turning Black Sheep's face to the light slowly. "What 's that big bird on the palings?"

"What bird?" asked Black Sheep.

The visitor looked deep down into Black Sheep's

eyes for a half a minute, and then said suddenly: "Good God, the little chap's nearly blind.

It was a most business-like visitor. He gave orders, on his own responsibility, that Black Sheep was not to go to school or open a book until Mamma came home. "She 'll be here in three weeks, as you know of course," said he, "and I 'm Inverarity Sahib. I ushered you into this wicked world, young man, and a nice use you seem to have made of your time. You must do nothing whatever. Can you do that?"

"Yes," said Punch in a dazed way. He had known that Mamma was coming. There was a chance, then, of another beating. Thank Heaven, Papa was n't coming too. Aunty Rosa had said of late that he ought to be beaten by a man.

For the next three weeks Black Sheep was strictly allowed to do nothing. He spent his time in the old nursery looking at the broken toys, for all of which account must be rendered to Mamma. Aunty Rosa hit him over the hands if even a wooden boat were broken. But that sin was of small importance compared to the other revelations, so darkly hinted at by Aunty Rosa. "When your mother comes, and hears what I have to tell her, she may appreciate you properly," she said grimly, and mounted guard over Judy lest that small maiden should attempt to comfort her brother, to the peril of her own soul.

And Mamma came — in a four-wheeler and a flutter of tender excitement. Such a Mamma! She was young, frivolously young, and beautiful, with delicately flushed cheeks, eyes that shone like stars, and a voice that needed no additional appeal of outstretched arms to draw little ones to her heart. Judy ran straight to her, but Black Sheep hesitated. Could this wonder be "showing off"? She would not put out her arms when she knew of his crimes. Meantime was it possible that by fondling she wanted to get anything out of Black Sheep? Only all his love and all his confidence; but that Black Sheep did not know. Aunty Rosa withdrew and left Mamma, kneeling between her children, half laughing, half crying, in the very hall where Punch and Judy had wept five years before.

"Well, chicks, do you remember me?"

"No," said Judy frankly, "but I said 'God bless Papa and Mamma,' ev'vy night."

"A little," said Black Sheep. "Remember I wrote to you every week, anyhow. That is n't to show off, but 'cause of what comes afterward."

"What comes after! What should come after, my darling boy? And she drew him to her again. He came awkwardly, with many angles. "Not used to petting," said the quick Mother-soul. "The girl is."

"She 's too little to hurt anyone," thought Black Sheep, "and if I said I 'd kill her, she 'd be afraid. I wonder what Aunty Rosa will tell."

There was a constrained late dinner, at the end of which Mamma picked up Judy and put her to bed with endearments manifold. Faithless little Judy had shown her defection from Aunty Rosa already. And that lady resented it bitterly. Black Sheep rose to leave the room.

"Come and say good night," said Aunty Rosa, offering a withered cheek.

"Huh!" said Black Sheep. "I never kiss you, and I 'm not going to show off. Tell that woman what I 've done, and see what she says."

Black Sheep climbed into bed feeling that he had lost Heaven after a glimpse through the gates. In half an hour "that woman" was bending over him. Black Sheep flung up his right arm. It was n't fair to come and hit him in the dark. Even Aunty Rosa never tried that. But no blow followed.

"Are you showing off? I won't tell you anything more than Aunty Rosa has, and she does n't know everything," said Black Sheep as clearly as he could for the arms round his neck.

"Oh, my son — my little, little son! It was my fault — my fault, darling — and yet how could we help it? Forgive me, Punch." The voice died out in a broken whisper, and two hot tears fell on Black Sheep's forehead.

"Has she been making you cry, too?" he asked. "You should see Jane cry. But you 're nice, and Jane is a Born Liar — Aunty Rosa says so."

"Hush, Punch, hush! My boy, don't talk like that. Try to love me a little bit — a little bit. You don't know how I want it. Punch-baba, come back to me! I am your Mother — your own Mother — and never mind the rest. I know — yes, I know, dear. It does n't matter now. Punch, won't you care for me a little?"

It is astonishing how much petting a big boy of ten can endure when he is quite sure that there is no one to laugh at him. Black Sheep had never been made much of before, and here was this beautiful woman treating him — Black Sheep, the Child of the Devil and the Inheritor of Undying Flame — as though he were a small God.

"I care for you a great deal, Mother dear," he whispered at last, "and I 'm glad you 've come back; but are you sure Aunty Rosa told you everything?"

"Everything. What does it matter? But ——" the voice broke with a sob that was also laughter — "Punch, my poor, dear, half-blind darling, don't you think it was a little foolish of you?"

"No. It saved a lickin'."

Mamma shuddered and slipped away in the darkness to write a long letter to Papa. Here is an extract:

". . . Judy is a dear, plump little prig who adores the woman, and wears with as much gravity as her religious opinions — only eight, Jack! — a

venerable horsehair atrocity which she calls her Bustle. I have just burned it, and the child is asleep in my bed as I write. She will come to me at once. Punch I cannot quite understand. He is well nourished, but seems to have been worried into a system of small deceptions which the woman magnifies into deadly sins. Don't you recollect our own up-bringing, dear, when the Fear of the Lord was so often the beginning of falsehood? I shall win Punch to me before long. I am taking the children away into the country to get them to know me, and, on the whole, I am content, or shall be when you come home, dear boy, and then, thank God, we shall be all under one roof again at last!"

Three months later, Punch, no longer Black Sheep, has discovered that he is the veritable owner of a real, live, lovely Mamma, who is also a sister, comforter, and friend, and that he must protect her till the Father comes home. Deception does not suit the part of a protector, and, when one can do anything without question, where is the use of deception?

"Mother would be awfully cross if you walked through that ditch," says Judy, continuing a conversation.

"Mother 's never angry," says Punch. "She 'd just say, 'You 're a little pagal'; and that 's not nice, but I 'll show."

Punch walks through the ditch and mires himself to the knees. "Mother, dear," he shouts, "I 'm just as dirty as I can pos-sib-ly be!"

"Then change your clothes as quickly as you pos-sib-ly can!" rings out Mother's clear voice from the house. "And don't be a little pagal!"

"There! Told you so," says Punch. "It 's all different now, and we are just as much Mother 's as if she had never gone."

Not altogether, O Punch, for when young lips have drunk deep of the bitter waters of Hate, Suspicion, and Despair, all the Love in the world will not wholly take away that knowledge; though it may turn darkened eyes for a while to the light, and teach Faith where no Faith was.

V

WEE WILLIE WINKIE

"An officer and a gentleman."

HIS full name was Percival William Williams, but he picked up the other name in a nursery-book, and that was the end of the christened titles. His mother's ayah called him Willie-Baba, but as he never paid the faintest attention to anything that the ayah said, her wisdom did not help matters.

His father was the Colonel of the 195th, and as soon as Wee Willie Winkie was old enough to understand what Military Discipline meant, Colonel Williams put him under it. There was no other way of managing the child. When he was good for a week, he drew good-conduct pay; and when he was bad, he was deprived of his good-conduct-stripe. Generally he was bad, for India offers so many chances to little six-year-olds of going wrong.

Children resent familiarity from strangers, and Wee Willie Winkie was a very particular child. Once he accepted an acquaintance, he was graciously pleased to thaw. He accepted Brandis, a subaltern of the 195th, on sight. Brandis was

having tea at the Colonel's, and Wee Willie Winkie entered, strong in the possession of a good-conduct badge won for not chasing the hens round the compound. He regarded Brandis with gravity for at least ten minutes, and then delivered himself of his opinion.

"I like you," said he slowly, getting off his chair and coming over to Brandis. "I like you. I shall call you Coppy, because of your hair. Do you mind being called Coppy? It is because of ve hair, you know."

Here was one of the most embarrassing of Wee Willie Winkie's peculiarities. He would look at a stranger for some time, and then, without warning or explanation, would give him a name. And the name stuck. No regimental penalties could break Wee Willie Winkie of this habit. He lost his good-conduct badge for christening the Commissioner's wife "Pobs"; but nothing that the Colonel could do made the Station forego the nickname, and Mrs. Collen remained Mrs. "Pobs" till the end of her stay. So Brandis was christened "Coppy," and rose, therefore, in the estimation of the regiment.

If Wee Willie Winkie took an interest in anyone, the fortunate man was envied alike by the mess and the rank and file. And in their envy lay no suspicion of self-interest. "The Colonel's son" was idolized on his own merits entirely. Yet

Wee Willie Winkie was not lovely. His face was permanently freckled, as his legs were permanently scratched, and in spite of his mother's almost tearful remonstrances he had insisted upon having his long yellow locks cut short in the military fashion. "I want my hair like Sergeant Tummil's," said Wee Willie Winkie, and, his father abetting, the sacrifice was accomplished.

Three weeks after the bestowal of his youthful affections on Lieutenant Brandis — henceforward to be called "Coppy" for the sake of brevity — Wee Willie Winkie was destined to behold strange things and far beyond his comprehension.

Coppy returned his liking with interest. Coppy had let him wear for five rapturous minutes his own big sword — just as tall as Wee Willie Winkie. Coppy had promised him a terrier puppy; and Coppy had permitted him to witness the miraculous operation of shaving. Nay, more — Coppy had said that even he, Wee Willie Winkie, would rise in time to the ownership of a box of shiny knives, a silver soap-box and a silver-handled "sputter-brush," as Wee Willie Winkie called it. Decidedly, there was no one, except his father, who could give or take away good-conduct badges at pleasure, half so wise, strong, and valiant as Coppy with the Afghan and Egyptian medals on his breast. Why, then, should Coppy be guilty of the unmanly weakness of kissing — vehemently kissing

— a "big girl," Miss Allardyce to wit? In the course of a morning ride, Wee Willie Winkie had seen Coppy so doing, and, like the gentleman he was, had promptly wheeled round and cantered back to his groom, lest the groom should also see.

Under ordinary circumstances he would have spoken to his father, but he felt instinctively that this was a matter on which Coppy ought first to be consulted.

"Coppy," shouted Wee Willie Winkie, reining up outside that subaltern's bungalow early one morning — "I want to see you, Coppy!"

"Come in, young 'un," returned Coppy, who was at early breakfast in the midst of his dogs. "What mischief have you been getting into now?"

Wee Willie Winkie had done nothing notoriously bad for three days, and so stood on a pinnacle of virtue.

"I've been doing nothing bad," said he, curling himself into a long chair with a studious affectation of the Colonel's langour after a hot parade. He buried his freckled nose in a tea-cup and, with eyes staring roundly over the rim, asked: "I say, Coppy, is it pwoper to kiss big girls?"

"By Jove! You're beginning early. Who do you want to kiss?"

"No one. My muvver's always kissing me if I don't stop her. If it is n't pwoper, how was you

kissing Major Allardyce's big girl last morning, by ve canal?"

Coppy's brow wrinkled. He and Miss Allardyce had with great craft managed to keep their engagement secret for a fortnight. There were urgent and imperative reasons why Major Allardyce should not know how matters stood for at least another month, and this small marplot had discovered a great deal too much.

"I saw you," said Wee Willie Winkie calmly. "But ve groom did n't see. I said, 'Hut jao.'"

"Oh, you had that much sense, you young Rip," groaned poor Coppy, half amused and half angry. "And how many people may you have told about it?"

"Only me myself. You did n't tell when I twied to wide ve buffalo ven my pony was lame; and I fought you would n't like."

"Winkie," said Coppy enthusiastically, shaking the small hand, "you 're the best of good fellows. Look here, you can't understand all these things. One of these days — hang it, how can I make you see it! — I 'm going to marry Miss Allardyce, and then she 'll be Mrs. Coppy, as you say. If your young mind is so scandalized at the idea of kissing big girls, go and tell your father."

"What will happen?" said Wee Willie Winkie, who firmly believed that his father was omnipotent.

"I shall get into trouble," said Coppy, playing

his trump card with an appealing look at the holder of the ace.

"Ven I won't," said Wee Willie Winkie briefly. "But my faver says it 's un-man-ly to be always kissing, and I did n't fink you 'd do vat, Coppy."

"I 'm not always kissing, old chap. It 's only now and then, and when you 're bigger you 'll do it too. Your father meant it 's not good for little boys."

"Ah!" said Wee Willie Winkie, now fully enlightened. "It 's like ve sputter-brush?"

"Exactly," said Coppy gravely.

"But I don't fink I 'll ever want to kiss big girls, nor no one, 'cept my muvver. And I must vat, you know."

There was a long pause, broken by Wee Willie Winkie.

"Are you fond of vis big girl, Coppy?"

"Awfully!" said Coppy.

"Fonder van you are of Bell or ve Butcha — or me?"

"It 's in a different way," said Coppy. "You see, one of these days Miss Allardyce will belong to me, but you 'll grow up and command the Regiment and — all sorts of things. It 's quite different, you see."

"Very well," said Wee Willie Winkie, rising. "If you 're fond of ve big girl, I won't tell anyone. I must go now."

Coppy rose and escorted his small guest to the door, adding: "You 're the best of little fellows, Winkie. I tell you what. In thirty days from now you can tell if you like — tell anyone you like."

Thus the secret of the Brandis-Allardyce engagement was dependent on a little child's word. Coppy, who knew Wee Willie Winkie 's idea of truth, was at ease, for he felt that he would not break promises. Wee Willie Winkie betrayed a special and unusual interest in Miss Allardyce, and, slowly revolving round that embarrassed young lady, was used to regard her gravely with unwinking eye. He was trying to discover why Coppy should have kissed her. She was not half so nice as his own mother. On the other hand she was Coppy's property, and would in time belong to him. Therefore it behooved him to treat her with as much respect as Coppy's big sword or shiny pistol.

The idea that he shared a great secret in common with Coppy kept Wee Willie Winkie unusually virtuous for three weeks. Then the Old Adam broke out, and he made what he called a "camp-fire" at the bottom of the garden. How could he have foreseen that the flying sparks would have lighted the Colonel's little hay-rick and consumed a week's store for the horses? Sudden and swift was the punishment — deprivation of the good-conduct badge and, most sorrowful of all,

two days' confinement to barracks — the house and veranda — coupled with the withdrawal of the light of his father's countenance.

He took the sentence like the man he strove to be, drew himself up with a quivering under-lip, saluted, and, once clear of the room, ran to weep bitterly in his nursery — called by him "my quarters." Coppy came in the afternoon and attempted to console the culprit.

"I 'm under awwest," said Wee Willie Winkie mournfully, "and I did n't ought to speak to you."

Very early the next morning he climbed on to the roof of the house — that was not forbidden — and beheld Miss Allardyce going for a ride.

"Where are you going?" cried Wee Willie Winkie.

"Across the river," she answered, and trotted forward.

Now the cantonment in which the 195th lay was bounded on the north by a river — dry in the winter. From his earliest years, Wee Willie Winkie had been forbidden to go across the river, and had noted that even Coppy — the almost almighty Coppy — had never set foot beyond it. Wee Willie Winkie had once been read to, out of a big blue book, the history of the Princess and the Goblins — a most wonderful tale of a land where the Goblins were always warring with the children of men until they were defeated by one Curdie. Ever since that date it seemed to him that the bare black

and purple hills across the river were inhabited by Goblins, and, in truth, everyone had said that there lived the Bad Men. Even in his own house the lower halves of the windows were covered with green paper on account of the Bad Men who might, if allowed clear view, fire into peaceful drawing-rooms and comfortable bedrooms. Certainly, beyond the river, which was the end of all the Earth, lived the Bad Men. And here was Major Allardyce's big girl, Coppy's property, preparing to venture into their borders! What would Coppy say if anything happened to her? If the Goblins ran off with her as they did with Curdie's Princess? She must at all hazards be turned back.

The house was still. Wee Willie Winkie reflected for a moment on the very terrible wrath of his father; and then — broke his arrest! It was a crime unspeakable. The low sun threw his shadow, very large and very black, on the trim garden-paths, as he went down to the stables and ordered his pony. It seemed to him in the hush of the dawn that all the big world had been bidden to stand still and look at Wee Willie Winkie guilty of mutiny. The drowsy groom handed him his mount, and since the one great sin made all others insignificant, Wee Willie Winkie said that he was going to ride over to Coppy Sahib, and went out at a foot-pace, stepping on the soft mould of the flower-borders.

The devastating track of the pony's feet was the last misdeed that cut him off from all sympathy of Humanity. He turned into the road, leaned forward, and rode as fast as the pony could put foot to the ground in the direction of the river.

But the liveliest of twelve-two ponies can do little against the long canter of a Waler. Miss Allardyce was far ahead, had passed through the crops, beyond the Police-post, when all the guards were asleep, and her mount was scattering the pebbles of the river bed as Wee Willie Winkie left the cantonment and British India behind him. Bowed, forward and still flogging, Wee Willie Winkie shot into Afghan territory, and could just see Miss Allardyce a black speck, flickering across the stony plain. The reason of her wandering was simple enough. Coppy, in a tone of too-hastily-assumed authority, had told her over night that she must not ride out by the river. And she had gone to prove her own spirit and teach Coppy a lesson.

Almost at the foot of the inhospitable hills Wee Willie Winkie saw the Waler blunder and come down heavily. Miss Allardyce struggled clear, but her ankle had been severely twisted, and she could not stand. Having thus demonstrated her spirit, she wept copiously, and was surprised by the apparition of a white, wide-eyed child in khaki, on a nearly spent pony.

"Are you badly, badly hurted?" shouted Wee

Willie Winkie, as soon as he was within range. "You did n't ought to be here."

"I don't know," said Miss Allardyce ruefully, ignoring the reproof. "Good gracious, child, what are you doing here?"

"You said you was going acwoss ve wiver," panted Wee Willie Winkie, throwing himself off his pony. "And nobody — not even Coppy — must go acwoss ve wiver, and I came after you ever so hard, but you would n't stop, and now you 've hurted yourself, and Coppy will be angry wiv me, and — I 've bwoken my awwest! I 've bwoken my awwest!"

The future Colonel of the 195th sat down and sobbed. In spite of the pain in her ankle the girl was moved.

"Have you ridden all the way from cantonments, little man? What for?"

"You belonged to Coppy. Coppy told me so!" wailed Wee Willie Winkie disconsolately. "I saw him kissing you, and he said he was fonder of you van Bell or ve Butcha or me. And so I came. You must get up and come back. You did n't ought to be here. Vis is a bad place, and I 've bwoken my awwest."

"I can't move, Winkie," said Miss Allardyce, with a groan. "I 've hurt my foot. What shall I do?"

She showed a readiness to weep afresh which

steadied Wee Willie Winkie, who had been brought up to believe that tears were the depth of unmanliness. Still, when one is as great a sinner as Wee Willie Winkie, even a man may be permitted to break down.

"Winkie," said Miss Allardyce, "when you 've rested a little, ride back and tell them to send out something to carry me back in. It hurts fearfully."

The child sat still for a little time and Miss Allardyce closed her eyes; the pain was nearly making her faint. She was roused by Wee Willie Winkie tying up the reins on his pony's neck and setting it free with a vicious cut of his whip that made it whicker. The little animal headed toward the cantonments.

"Oh, Winkie! What are you doing?"

"Hush!" said Wee Willie Winkie. "Vere 's a man coming — one of ve Bad Men. I must stay wiv you. My faver says a man must always look after a girl. Jack will go home, and ven vey 'll come and look for us. Vat 's why I let him go."

Not one man, but two or three, had appeared from behind the rocks of the hills, and the heart of Wee Willie Winkie sank within him, for just in this manner were the Goblins wont to steal out and vex Curdie's soul. Thus had they played in Curdie's garden, he had seen the picture, and thus had they frightened the Princess's nurse. He heard them talking to each other, and recognized with

joy the bastard Pushto that he had picked up from one of his father's grooms lately dismissed. People who spoke that tongue could not be the Bad Men. They were only natives, after all.

They came up to the boulders on which Miss Allardyce's horse had blundered.

Then rose from the rock Wee Willie Winkie, child of the Dominant Race, aged six and three-quarters, and said briefly and emphatically "Jao!" The pony had crossed the river-bed.

The men laughed, and laughter from natives was the one thing Wee Willie Winkie could not tolerate. He asked them what they wanted and why they did not depart. Other men with most evil faces and crooked-stocked guns crept out of the shadows of the hills, till, soon, Wee Willie Winkie was face to face with an audience some twenty strong. Miss Allardyce screamed.

"Who are you?" said one of the men

"I am the Colonel Sahib's son, and my order is that you go at once. You black men are frightening the Miss Sahib. One of you must run into cantonments and take the news that the Miss Sahib has hurt herself, and that the Colonel's son is here with her."

"Put our feet into the trap?" was the laughing reply. "Hear this boy's speech!"

"Say that I sent you — I, the Colonel's son. They will give you money."

"What is the use of this talk? Take up the child and the girl, and we can at least ask for the ransom. Ours are the villages on the heights," said a voice in the background.

These were the Bad Men — worse than Goblins — and it needed all Wee Willie Winkie's training to prevent him from bursting into tears. But he felt that to cry before a native, excepting only his mother's ayah, would be an infamy greater than any mutiny. Moreover, he, as future Colonel of the 195th, had that grim regiment at his back.

"Are you going to carry us away?" said Wee Willie Winkie, very blanched and uncomfortable.

"Yes, my little Sahib Bahadur," said the tallest of the men, "and eat you afterward."

"That is child's talk," said Wee Willie Winkie. "Men do not eat men."

A yell of laughter interrupted him, but he went on firmly — "And if you do carry us away, I tell you that all my regiment will come up in a day and kill you all without leaving one. Who will take my message to the Colonel Sahib?"

Speech in any vernacular — and Wee Willie Winkie had a colloquial acquaintance with three — was easy to the boy who could not yet manage his "r's" and "th's" aright.

Another man joined the conference, crying: "Oh, foolish men! What this babe says is true. He is the heart's heart of those white troops. For

the sake of peace let them go both, for if he be taken, the regiment will break loose and gut the valley. Our villages are in the valley, and we shall not escape. That regiment are devils. They broke Khoda Yar's breast-bone with kicks when he tried to take the rifles; and if we touch this child they will fire and rape and plunder for a month, till nothing remains. Better to send a man back to take the message and get a reward. I say that this child is their God, and that they will spare none of us, nor our women, if we harm him."

It was Din Mahommed, the dismissed groom of the Colonel, who made the diversion, and an angry and heated discussion followed. Wee Willie Winkie, standing over Miss Allardyce, waited the upshot. Surely his "wegiment," his own "wegiment," would not desert him if they knew of his extremity.

The riderless pony brought the news to the 195th, though there had been consternation in the Colonel's household for an hour before. The little beast came in through the parade-ground in front of the main barracks, where the men were settling down to play Spoil-five till the afternoon. Devlin, the Colour Sergeant of E Company, glanced at the enpty saddle and tumbled through the barrack-rooms, kicking up each Room Corporal as he passed. "Up, ye beggars! There 's something happened to the Colonel's son," he shouted.

"He could n't fall off! S 'elp me, 'e could n't fall off," blubbered a drummer-boy. "Go an' hunt acrost the river. He 's over there if he 's anywhere, an' maybe those Pathans have got 'im. For the love o' Gawd don't look for 'im in the nullahs! Let 's go over the river."

"There 's sense in Mott yet," said Devlin. "E Company, double out to the river — sharp!"

So E Company, in its shirt-sleeves mainly, doubled for the dear life, and in the rear toiled the perspiring Sergeant, adjuring it to double yet faster. The cantonment was alive with the men of the 195th hunting for Wee Willie Winkie, and the Colonel finally overtook E Company, far too exhausted to swear, struggling in the pebbles of the river-bed.

Up the hill under which Wee Willie Winkie's Bad Men were discussing the wisdom of carrying off the child and the girl, a lookout fired two shots.

"What have I said?" shouted Din Mahommed. "There is the warning! The pulton are out already and are coming across the plain! Get away! Let us not be seen with the boy!"

The men waited for an instant, and then, as another shot was fired, withdrew into the hills, silently as they had appeared.

"The wegiment is coming," said Wee Willie Winkie confidently to Miss Allardyce, "and it 's all wight. Don't cwy!"

He needed the advice himself, for ten minutes later, when his father came up, he was weeping bitterly with his head in Miss Allardyce's lap.

And the men of the 195th carried him home with shouts and rejoicings; and Coppy, who had ridden a horse into a lather, met him, and, to his intense disgust, kissed him openly in the presence of the men.

But there was balm for his dignity. His father assured him that not only would the breaking of arrest be condoned, but that the good-conduct badge would be restored as soon as his mother could sew it on his blouse-sleeve. Miss Allardyce had told the Colonel a story that made him proud of his son.

"She belonged to you, Coppy," said Wee Willie Winkie, indicating Miss Allardyce with a grimy forefinger. "I knew she did n't ought to go acwoss ve wiver, and I knew ve wegiment would come to me if I sent Jack home."

"You 're a hero, Winkie," said Coppy — "a pukka hero!"

"I don't know what vat means," said Wee Willie Winkie, "but you must n't call me Winkie any no more. I 'm Percival Will'am Will'ams."

And in this manner did Wee Willie Winkie enter into his manhood.

VI

THE DOVE OF DACCA

THE freed dove flew to the Rajah's tower —
Fled from the slaughter of Moslem kings —
And the thorns have covered the city of Gaur.
Dove — dove — oh, homing dove!
Little white traitor, with woe on thy wings!

The Rajah of Dacca rode under the wall;
He set in his bosom a dove of flight —
'If she return, be sure that I fall."
Dove — dove — oh, homing dove!
Pressed to his heart in the thick of the fight.

"Fire the palace, the fort, and the keep —
Leave to the foeman no spoil at all.
In the flame of the palace lie down and sleep
If the dove, if the dove — if the homing dove
Come and alone to the palace wall."

The Kings of the North they were scattered abroad —
The Rajah of Dacca he slew them all.
Hot from slaughter he stooped at the ford,
And the dove — the dove — oh, the homing dove!
She thought of her cote on the palace wall.

She opened her wings and she flew away —
  Fluttered away beyond recall;
She came to the palace at break of day.
  Dove — dove — oh, homing dove!
Flying so fast for a kingdom's fall.

The Queens of Dacca they slept in flame —
  Slept in the flame of the palace old —
To save their honour from Moslem shame.
  And the dove — the dove — oh, the homing dove!
She cooed to her young where the smoke-cloud rolled.

The Rajah of Dacca rode far and fleet,
  Followed as fast as a horse could fly,
He came and the palace was black at his feet;
  And the dove — the dove — the homing dove,
Circled alone in the stainless sky.

So the dove flew to the Rajah's tower —
  Fled from the slaughter of Moslem kings;
So the thorns covered the city of Gaur,
  And Dacca was lost for a white dove's wings.
Dove — dove — oh, homing dove,
  Dacca is lost from the roll of the kings!

VII

THE SMOKE UPON YOUR ALTAR DIES

(*To whom it may concern.*)

THE smoke upon your Altar dies,
The flowers decay,
The Goddess of your sacrifice
Has flown away.
What profit, then, to sing or slay
The sacrifice from day to day?

"We know the Shrine is void," they said,
"The Goddess flown —
Yet wreaths are on the Altar laid —
The Altar-Stone
Is black with fumes of sacrifice,
Albeit She has fled our eyes.

"For it may be, if still we sing
And tend the Shrine,
Some Deity on wandering wing
May there incline;
And, finding all in order meet,
Stay while we worship at Her feet."

VIII

RECESSIONAL

The Recessional is one of the most popular poems of this century. It is a warning to an age and a nation drunk with power, a rebuke to materialistic tendencies and boastfulness, a protest against pride.

"Reverence is the master-key of knowledge."

GOD of our fathers, known of old —
Lord of our far-flung battle-line —
Beneath whose awful Hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine —
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies —
The captains and the kings depart —
Still stands Thine ancient Sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

Far-called our navies melt away —
On dune and headland sinks the fire —
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
  Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe —
Such boasting as the Gentiles use
  Or lesser breeds without the Law —
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
  In reeking tube and iron shard —
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
  And guarding calls not Thee to guard —
For frantic boast and foolish word,
Thy mercy on Thy People, Lord! Amen.

IX

L'ENVOI

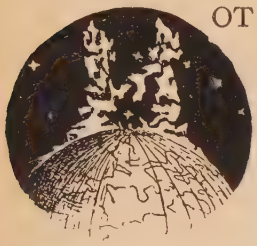
WHEN Earth's last picture is painted, and the tubes are twisted and dried,
When the oldest colours have faded, and the youngest critic has died,
We shall rest, and, faith, we shall need it — lie down for an æon or two,
Till the Master of All Good Workmen shall set us to work anew!

And those who were good shall be happy: they shall sit in a golden chair;
They shall splash at a ten-league canvas with brushes of comet's hair;
They shall find real saints to draw from — Magdalene, Peter, and Paul;
They shall work for an age at a sitting and never be tired at all!

And only the Master shall praise us, and only the Master shall blame;
And no one shall work for money, and no one shall work for fame;
But each for the joy of the working, and each, in his separate star,
Shall draw the Thing as he sees It for the God of Things as They Are!

I

THE SING-SONG OF OLD MAN KANGAROO



NOT always was the Kangaroo as now we do behold him, but a Different Animal with four short legs. He was gray and he was woolly, and his pride was inordinate: he danced on an outcrop in the middle of Australia, and he went to the Little God Nqa at six before breakfast, saying, "Make me different from all other animals by five this afternoon."

Up jumped Nqa from his seat on the sandflat and shouted, "Go away!"

He was gray and he was woolly, and his pride was inordinate: he danced on a rockledge in the middle of Australia, and he went to the Middle God Nquing.

He went to Nquing at eight after breakfast, saying, "Make me different from all other animals; make me, also, wonderfully popular by five this afternoon."

Up jumped Nquing from his burrow in the spinifex and shouted, "Go away!"

He was gray and he was woolly, and his pride was

inordinate: he danced on a sandbank in the middle of Australia, and he went to the Big God Nqong.

He went to Nqong at ten before dinner-time, saying, "Make me different from all other animals; make me popular and wonderfully run after by five this afternoon."

Up jumped Nqong from his bath in the salt-pan and shouted, "Yes, I will!"

Nqong called Dingo — Yellow-Dog Dingo — always hungry, dusty in the sunshine, and showed him Kangaroo. Nqong said, "Dingo! Wake up, Dingo! Do you see that gentleman dancing on an ash-pit? He wants to be popular and very truly run after. Dingo, make him so!"

Up jumped Dingo — Yellow-Dog Dingo — and said, "What, *that* cat-rabbit?"

Off ran Dingo — Yellow-Dog Dingo — always hungry, grinning like a coal-scuttle — ran after Kangaroo.

Off went the proud Kangaroo on his four little legs like a bunny.

This, O Beloved of mine, ends the first part of the tale!

He ran through the desert; he ran through the mountains; he ran through the salt-pans; he ran through the reed-beds; he ran through the blue gums; he ran through the spinifex; he ran till his front legs ached.

He had to!

This is a picture of Old Man Kangaroo when he was the Different Animal with four short legs. I have drawn him gray and woolly, and you can see that he is very proud because he has a wreath of flowers in his hair. He is dancing on an outcrop (that means a ledge of rock) in the middle of Australia at six o'clock before breakfast. You can see that it is six o'clock, because the sun is just getting up. The thing with the ears and the open mouth is Little God Nqa. Nqa is very much surprised, because he has never seen a Kangaroo dance like that before. Little God Nqai s just saying, "Go away," but the Kangaroo is so busy dancing that he has not heard him yet.

The Kangaroo has n't any real name except Boomer. He lost it because he was so proud.

Still ran Dingo — Yellow-Dog Dingo — always hungry, grinning like a rat-trap, never getting nearer, never getting farther — ran after Kangaroo.

He had to!

Still ran Kangaroo — Old Man Kangaroo. He ran through the ti-trees; he ran through the mulga; he ran through the long grass; he ran through the short grass; he ran through the Tropics of Capricorn and Cancer; he ran till his hind legs ached.

He had to!

Still ran Dingo — Yellow-Dog Dingo — hungrier and hungrier, grinning like a horse-collar, never getting nearer, never getting farther; and they came to the Wollgong River.

Now, there was n't any bridge, and there was n't any ferry-boat, and Kangaroo did n't know how to get over; so he stood on his legs and hopped.

He had to!

He hopped through the Flinders; he hopped through the Cinders; he hopped through the deserts in the middle of Australia. He hopped like a Kangaroo.

First he hopped one yard; then he hopped three yards; then he hopped five yards; his legs growing stronger; his legs growing longer. He had n't any time for rest or refreshment, and he wanted them very much.

Still ran Dingo — Yellow-Dog Dingo — very much bewildered, very much hungry, and wondering

This is the picture of Old Man Kangaroo at five in the afternoon, when he had got his beautiful hind legs just as Big God Nqong had promised. You can see that it is five o'clock, because Big God Nqong's pet tame clock says so. That is Nqong in his bath, sticking his feet out. Old Man Kangaroo is being rude to Yellow-Dog Dingo. Yellow-Dog Dingo has been trying to catch Kangaroo all across Australia. You can see the marks of Kangaroo's big new feet running ever so far back over the bare hills. Yellow-Dog Dingo is drawn black, because I am not allowed to paint these pictures with real colours out of the paint-box; and besides, Yellow-Dog Dingo got dreadfully black and dusty after running through the Flinders and the Cinders.

I don't know the names of the flowers growing round Nqong's bath. The two little squatty things out in the desert are the other two gods that Old Man Kangaroo spoke to early in the morning. That thing with the letters on it is Old Man Kangaroo's pouch. He had to have a pouch just as he had to have legs,

what in the world or out of it made Old Man Kangaroo hop.

For he hopped like a cricket; like a pea in a saucepan; or a new rubber ball on a nursery floor.

He had to!

He tucked up his front legs; he hopped on his hind legs; he stuck out his tail for a balance-weight behind him; and he hopped through the Darling Downs.

He had to!

Still ran Dingo — Tired Dog Dingo — hungrier and hungrier, very much bewildered, and wondering when in the world or out of it would Old Man Kangaroo stop.

Then came Nqong from his bath in the salt-pan, and said, "It 's five o'clock."

Down sat Dingo — Poor Dog Dingo — always hungry, dusky in the sunshine; hung out his tongue and howled.

Down sat Kangaroo — Old Man Kangaroo — stuck out his tail like a milking-stool behind him, and said, "Thank goodness *that's* finished!"

Then said Nqong, who is always a gentleman, "Why aren't you grateful to Yellow-Dog Dingo? Why don't you thank him for all he has done for you?"

Then said Kangaroo — Tired Old Kangaroo — "He 's chased me out of the homes of my childhood; he 's chased me out of my regu-

lar meal-times; he 's altered my shape so I 'll never get it back; and he 's played Old Scratch with my legs."

Then said Nqong, "Perhaps I 'm mistaken, but didn't you ask me to make you different from all other animals, as well as to make you very truly sought after? And now it is five o'clock."

"Yes," said Kangaroo. "I wish that I had n't. I thought you would do it by charms and incantations, but this is a practical joke."

"Joke!" said Nqong from his bath in the blue gums. "Say that again and I 'll whistle up Dingo and run your hind legs off."

"No," said the Kangaroo. "I must apologize. Legs are legs, and you need n't alter 'em so far as I am concerned. I only meant to explain to Your Lordliness that I 've had nothing to eat since morning, and I 'm very empty indeed."

"Yes," said Dingo — Yellow-Dog Dingo — "I am just in the same situation. I 've made him different from all other animals; but what may I have for my tea?"

Then said Nqong from his bath in the salt-pan, "Come and ask me about it to-morrow, because I 'm going to wash."

So they were left in the middle of Australia, Old Man Kangaroo and Yellow-Dog Dingo, and each said, "That 's *your* fault."

This is the mouth-filling song
Of the race that was run by a Boomer,
Run in a single burst — only event of its kind —
Started by Big God Nqong from Warrigaborrigarooma,
Old Man Kangaroo first: Yellow-Dog Dingo behind.

Kangaroo bounded away,
His back-legs working like pistons —
Bounded from morning till dark,
Twenty-five feet to a bound.
Yellow-Dog Dingo lay
Like a yellow cloud in the distance —
Much too busy to bark.
My! but they covered the ground!

Nobody knows where they went,
Or followed the track that they flew in,
For that Continent
Had n't been given a name.
They ran thirty degrees,
From Torres Straits to the Leeuwin
(Look at the Atlas, please),
And they ran back as they came.

S'posing you could trot
From Adelaide to the Pacific,
For an afternoon's run —

Half what these gentlemen did —
You would feel rather hot
But your legs would develop terrific —
Yes, my importunate son,
You 'd be a Marvellous Kid!

II

FUZZY-WUZZY

At the School Council Fuzzy-Wuzzy was elected Vice-President of Mr. Kipling's Poems, "because he was so brave."

(*Soudan Expeditionary Force.*)

WE 'VE fought with many men acrost the seas,
An' some of 'em was brave an' some was not:
The Paythan an' the Zulu an' Burmese;
But the Fuzzy was the finest o' the lot.
We never got a ha'porth's change of 'im:
'E squatted in the scrub an' 'ocked our 'orses,
'E cut our sentries up at Sua*kim*,
An' 'e played the cat an' banjo with our forces.

So 'ere 's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your 'ome in the Sowdan;
You 're a poor benighted 'eathen, but a first-class fightin' man;
We gives you your certifikit, an' if you want it signed,
We 'll come an' 'ave a romp with you whenever you 're inclined.

We took our chanst among the Khyber hills,
The Boers knocked us silly at a mile,

The Burman guv us Irriwaddy chills,
  An' a Zulu *impi* dished us up in style;
But all we ever got from such as they
  Was pop to what the Fuzzy made us swaller;
We 'eld our bloomin' own, the papers say,
  But man for man the Fuzzy knocked us 'oller.

    Then 'ere 's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, an' the missis
        an' the kid,
    Our orders was to break you, an' of course we
        went an' did.
    We sloshed you with Martinis, an' it was n't
        'ardly fair;
    But for all the odds agin you, Fuzzy Wuz, you
        bruk the square.

'E 'as n't got no papers of 'is own,
  'E 'as n't got no medals nor rewards,
So we must certify the skill 'e 's shown
  In usin' of 'is long two-'anded swords;
When 'e 's 'oppin' in an' out among the bush
  With 'is coffin-headed shield an' shovel-spear,
A 'appy day with Fuzzy on the rush
  Will last a 'ealthy Tommy for a year.

    So 'ere 's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, an' your friends
        which is no more,
    If we 'ad n't lost some messmates we would 'elp
        you to deplore;

But give an' take 's the gospel, an' we 'll call the bargain fair,
For if you 'ave lost more than us, you crumpled up the square!

'E rushes at the smoke, when we let drive,
An', before we know, 'e 's 'ackin' at our 'ead;
'E 's all 'ot sand an ginger when alive,
An' 'e 's generally shammin' when 'e 's dead.
'E 's a daisy, 'e 's a duck, 'e 's a lamb!
'E 's a Injun-rubber idiot on the spree,
'E 's the on'y thing that does n't care a clam
For the Regiment o' British Infantree.

So 'ere 's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your 'ome in the Sowdan;
You 're a pore benighted 'eathen but a first-class fightin' man;
An' 'ere 's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, with your 'ayrick 'ead of 'air —
You big black boundin' beggar — for you bruk a British square.

III

THE ENGLISH FLAG

Above the portico the Union Jack remained fluttering in the flames for some time, but ultimately when it fell the crowds rent the air with shouts, and seemed to see significance in the incident.—*Daily Papers.*

WINDS of the World, give answer? They are whimpering to and fro —
And what should they know of England who only England know? —
The poor little street-bred people that vapour and fume and brag,
They are lifting their heads in the stillness to yelp at the English Flag!

Must we borrow a clout from the Boer — to plaster anew with dirt?
An Irish liar's bandage, or an English coward's shirt?
We may not speak of England; her Flag's to sell or share.
What is the Flag of England? Winds of the World, declare!

The North Wind blew: — "From Bergen my steel-shod vanguards go;

I chase your lazy whalers home from the Disko floe;
By the great North Lights above me I work the will of God,
That the liner splits on the ice-field or the Dogger fills with cod.

"I barred my gates with iron, I shuttered my doors with flame,
Because to force my ramparts your nutshell navies came;
I took the sun from their presence, I cut them down with my blast,
And they died, but the Flag of England blew free ere the spirit passed.

"The lean white bear hath seen it in the long, long Arctic night,
The musk-ox knows the standard that flouts the Northern Light:
What is the Flag of England? Ye have but my bergs to dare,
Ye have but my drifts to conquer. Go forth, for it is there!"

The South Wind sighed: — "From The Virgins my mid-sea course was ta'en
Over a thousand islands lost in an idle main,
Where the sea-egg flames on the coral and the long-backed breakers croon

Their endless ocean legends to the lazy, locked
lagoon.

"Strayed amid lonely islets, mazed amid outer keys,
I waked the palms to laughter — I tossed the scud
in the breeze —
Never was isle so little, never was sea so lone,
But over the scud and the palm-trees an English
flag was flown.

"I have wrenched it free from the halliard, to hang
for a wisp on the Horn;
I have chased it north to the Lizard — ribboned and
rolled and torn;
I have spread its fold o'er the dying, adrift in a
hopeless sea;
I have hurled it swift on the slaver, and seen the
slave set free.

"My basking sunfish know it, and wheeling alba-
tross,
Where the lone wave fills with fire beneath the
Southern Cross.
What is the Flag of England? Ye have but my
reefs to dare,
Ye have but my seas to furrow. Go forth, for it is
there!"

The East Wind roared: — "From the Kuriles, the
Bitter Seas, I come,

And me men call the Home-Wind, for I bring the English home.
Look — look well to your shipping! By the breath of my mad typhoon
I swept your close-packed Praya and beached your best at Kowloon!

"The reeling junks behind me and the racing seas before,
I raped your richest roadstead — I plundered Singapore!
I set my hand on the Hoogli; as a hooded snake she rose,
And I flung your stoutest steamers to roost with the startled crows.

"Never the lotos closes, never the wild-fowl wake,
But a soul goes out on the East Wind that died for England's sake —
Man or woman or suckling, mother or bride or maid —
Because on the bones of the English the English Flag is stayed.

"The desert-dust hath dimmed it, the flying wild-ass knows.
The scared white leopard winds it across the taintless snows.
What is the Flag of England? Ye have but my sun to dare,

Ye have but my sands to travel. Go forth, for it is there!"

The West Wind called: — "In squadrons the thoughtless galleons fly
That bear the wheat and cattle lest street-bred people die.
They make my might their porter, they make my house their path,
Till I loose my neck from their rudder and whelm them all in my wrath.

"I draw the gliding fog-bank as a snake is drawn from the hole;
They bellow one to the other, the frightened ship-bells toll,
For day is a drifting terror till I raise the shroud with my breath,
And they see strange bows above them and the two go locked to death.

"But whether in calm or wrack-wreath, whether by dark or day,
I heave them whole to the conger or rip their plates away,
First of the scattered legions, under a shrieking sky,
Dipping between the rollers, the English Flag goes by.

"The dead dumb fog hath wrapped it — the frozen dews have kissed —
The naked stars have seen it, a fellow-star in the mist.
What is the Flag of England? Ye have but my breath to dare,
Ye have but my waves to conquer. Go forth for it is there!"

IV

THE KING

FAREWELL, Romance!" the Cave-men said;
"With bone well carved he went away;
Flint arms the ignoble arrowhead,
And jasper tips the spear to-day.
Changed are the Gods of Hunt and Dance,
And he with these. Farewell, Romance!"

"Farewell, Romance!" the Lake-folk sighed;
"We lift the weight of flatling years;
The caverns of the mountain side
Hold him who scorns our hutted piers.
Lost hills whereby we dare not dwell,
Guard ye his rest. Romance, farewell!"

"Farewell, Romance!" the Soldier spoke;
"By sleight of sword we may not win,
But scuffle 'mid uncleanly smoke
Of arquebus and culverin.
Honour is lost, and none may tell
Who paid good blows. Romance, farewell!"

"Farewell, Romance!" the Traders cried;
  "Our keels ha' lain with every sea;
The dull-returning wind and tide
  Heave up the wharf where we would be·
The known and noted breezes swell
Our trudging sail. Romance, farewell!"

"Good-bye, Romance!" the Skipper said;
  "He vanished with the coal we burn;
Our dial marks full steam ahead.
  Our speed is timed to half a turn.
Sure as the tidal trains we ply
'Twixt port and port. Romance, good-bye!"

"Romance!" the Season-tickets mourn,
  "*He* never ran to catch his train,
But passed with coach and guard and horn —
  And left the local — late again!
Confound Romance!" . . . And all unseen
Romance brought up the nine-fifteen.

His hand was on the lever laid,
  His oil-can soothed the worrying cranks,
His whistle waked the snow-bound grade,
  His fog-horn cut the reeking Banks;
In dock and deep and mine and mill
The Boy-god reckless laboured still.

Robed, crowned and throned, he wove his spell,
  Where heart-blood beat or hearth-smoke curled
With unconsidered miracle,
  Hedged in a backward-gazing world;
Then taught his chosen bard to say:
"The King was with us — yesterday!"

V

TO THE UNKNOWN GODDESS

WILL you conquer my heart with your beauty, my soul going out from afar?
Shall I fall to your hand as a victim of crafty and cautious *shikar?*

Have I met you and passed you already, unknowing, unthinking, and blind
Shall I meet you next session at Simla, oh, sweetest and best of your kind?

. . . . . .

Ah, Goddess! child, spinster, or widow — as of old on Mars Hill when they raised
To the God that they knew not an altar — so I, a young Pagan, have praised

The Goddess I know not nor worship; yet, if half that men tell me be true,
You will come in the future, and therefore these verses are written to you.

VI

THE GALLEY SLAVE

OH, GALLANT was our galley from her carven steering-wheel
To her figurehead of silver and her beak of hammered steel;
The leg-bar chafed the ankle, and we gasped for cooler air,
But no galley on the water with our galley could compare!

Our bulkheads bulged with cotton and our masts were stepped in gold —
We ran a mighty merchandise of Negroes in the hold;
The white foam spun behind us, and the black shark swam below,
As we gripped the kicking sweep-head and we made that galley go.

It was merry in the galley, for we revelled now and then —
If they wore us down like cattle, faith, we fought and loved like men!

As we snatched her through the water, so we snatched
a minute's bliss,
And the mutter of the dying never spoiled the
lover's kiss.

Our women and our children toiled beside us in
the dark —
They died, we filed their fetters, and we heaved
them to the shark —
We heaved them to the fishes, but so fast the galley
sped,
We had only time to envy, for we could not mourn
our dead.

Bear witness, once my comrades, what a hard-bit
gang were we —
The servants of the sweep-head, but the masters of
the sea!
By the hands that drove her forward as she plunged
and yawed and sheered,
Woman, Man, or God, or Devil, was there any-
thing we feared?

Was it storm? Our fathers faced it, and a wilder
never blew;
Earth that waited for the wreckage watched the
galley struggle through.
Burning noon or choking midnight, Sickness,
Sorrow, Parting, Death?

Nay, our very babes would mock you, had they
time for idle breath.

But to-day I leave the galley, and another takes
my place;
There 's my name upon the deck-beam — let it
stand a little space.
I am free — to watch my messmates beating out
to open main,
Free of all that Life can offer — save to handle
sweep again.

By the brand upon my shoulder, by the gall of
clinging steel,
By the welt the whips have left me, by the scars
that never heal;
By eyes grown old with staring through the sun-
wash on the brine,
I am paid in full for service — would that service
still were mine!

. . . . . .

It may be that Fate will give me life and leave to
row once more —
Set some strong man free for fighting as I take
awhile his oar.
But to-day I leave the galley. Shall I curse her
service then?
God be thanked — whate'er comes after, I have
lived and toiled with men!

VII

THE SHIP THAT FOUND HERSELF

IT was her first voyage, and though she was but a cargo-steamer of twenty-five hundred tons, she was the very best of her kind, the outcome of forty years of experiments and improvements in framework and machinery; and her designers and owner thought as much of her as though she had been the *Lucania*. Anyone can make a floating hotel that will pay expenses, if he puts enough money into the saloon, and charges for private baths, suites of rooms, and such like; but in these days of competition and low freights every square inch of a cargo-boat must be built for cheapness, great hold-capacity, and a certain steady speed. This boat was, perhaps, two hundred and forty feet long and thirty-two feet wide, with arrangements that enabled her to carry cattle on her main and sheep on her upper deck if she wanted to; but her great glory was the amount of cargo that she could store away in her holds. Her owners — they were a very well-known Scotch firm — came round with her from the north, where she had been launched and christened and fitted, to Liver-

pool, where she was to take cargo for New York; and the owner's daughter, Miss Frazier, went to and fro on the clean decks, admiring the new paint and the brass work, and the patent winches, and particularly the strong, straight bow, over which she had cracked a bottle of champagne when she named the steamer the *Dimbula*. It was a beautiful September afternoon, and the boat in all her newness — she was painted lead-colour with a red funnel — looked very fine indeed. Her house-flag was flying, and her whistle from time to time acknowledged the salutes of friendly boats, who saw that she was new to the High and Narrow Seas and wished to make her welcome.

"And now," said Miss Frazier, delightedly, to the captain, "she 's a real ship, is n't she? It seems only the other day father gave the order for her, and now — and now — is n't she a beauty!" The girl was proud of the firm, and talked as though she were the controlling partner.

"Oh, she 's no so bad," the skipper replied cautiously. "But I 'm sayin' that it takes more than christenin' to mak' a ship. In the nature o' things, Miss Frazier, if ye follow me, she 's just irons and rivets and plates put into the form of a ship. She has to find herself yet."

"I thought father said she was exceptionally well found."

"So she is," said the skipper, with a laugh. "But

it 's this way wi' ships, Miss Frazier. She 's all here, but the parrts of her have not learned to work together yet. They 've had no chance."

"The engines are working beautifully. I can hear them."

"Yes, indeed. But there 's more than engines to a ship. Every inch of her, ye 'll understand, has to be livened up and made to work wi' its neighbour — sweetenin' her, we call it, technically."

"And how will you do it?" the girl asked.

"We can no more than drive and steer her, and so forth; but if we have rough weather this trip — it 's likely — she 'll learn the rest by heart! For a ship, ye 'll obsairve, Miss Frazier, is in no sense a reegid body closed at both ends. She 's a highly complex structure o' various an' conflictin' strains, wi' tissues that must give an' tak' accordin' to her personal modulus of elasteecity." Mr. Buchanan, the chief engineer, was coming toward them. "I 'm sayin' to Miss Frazier, here, that our little *Dimbula* has to be sweetened yet, and nothin' but a gale will do it. How 's all wi' your engines, Buck?"

"Well enough — true by plumb an' rule, o' course; but there 's no spontaneeity yet." He turned to the girl. "Take my word, Miss Frazier, and maybe ye 'll comprehend later; even after a pretty girl's christened a ship it does not follow that there 's such a thing as a ship under the men that work her."

"I was sayin' the very same, Mr. Buchanan," the skipper interrupted.

"That 's more metaphysical than I can follow," said Miss Frazier, laughing.

"Why so? Ye 're good Scotch, an' — I knew your mother's father, he was fra' Dumfries — ye 've a vested right in metapheesics, Miss Frazier, just as ye have in the *Dimbula*," the engineer said.

"Eh, well, we must go down to the deep watters, an' earn Miss Frazier her deevidends. Will you not come to my cabin for tea?" said the skipper. "We 'll be in dock the night, and when you 're goin' back to Glasgie ye can think of us loadin' her down an' drivin' her forth — all for your sake."

In the next few days they stowed some four thousand tons' dead weight into the *Dimbula*, and took her out from Liverpool. As soon as she met the lift of the open water, she naturally began to talk. If you lay your ear to the side of the cabin next time you are in a steamer, you will hear hundreds of little voices in every direction, thrilling and buzzing, and whispering and popping, and gurgling and sobbing and squeaking exactly like a telephone in a thunder-storm. Wooden ships shriek and growl and grunt, but iron vessels throb and quiver through all their hundreds of ribs and thousands of rivets. The *Dimbula* was very strongly built, and every piece of her had a letter or number. or both. to describe it; and every piece

had been hammered, or forged, or rolled, or punched by man, and had lived in the roar and rattle of the shipyard for months. Therefore, every piece had its own separate voice in exact proportion to the amount of trouble spent upon it. Cast-iron as a rule, says very little; but mild steel plates and wrought-iron, and ribs and beams that have been much bent and welded and riveted, talk continuously. Their conversation, of course, is not half as wise as our human talk, because they are all, though they do not know it, bound down one to the other in a black darkness, where they cannot tell what is happening near them, nor what will overtake them next.

As soon as she had cleared the Irish coast a sullen gray-headed old wave of the Atlantic climbed leisurely over her straight bows, and sat down on her steam-capstan used for hauling up the anchor. Now the capstan and the engine that drove it had been newly painted red and green; besides which, nobody likes being ducked.

"Don't you do that again," the capstan sputtered through the teeth of his cogs. "Hi! Where 's the fellow gone?"

The wave had slouched overside with a plop and a chuckle; but "Plenty more where he came from," said a brother-wave, and went through and over the capstan, who was bolted firmly to an iron plate on the iron deck-beams below.

"Can't you keep still up there?" said the deck-beams. "What 's the matter with you? One minute you weigh twice as much as you ought to, and the next you don't!"

"It is n't my fault," said the capstan. "There 's a green brute outside that comes and hits me on the head."

"Tell that to the shipwrights. You 've been in position for months and you 've never wriggled like this before. If you are n't careful you 'll strain *us*."

"Talking of strain," said a low, rasping, unpleasant voice, "are any of you fellows — you deck-beams, we mean — aware that those exceedingly ugly knees of yours happen to be riveted into our structure — *ours?*"

"Who might you be?" the deck-beams inquired.

"Oh, nobody in particular," was the answer. "We 're only the port and starboard upper-deck stringers; and if you persist in heaving and hiking like this, we shall be reluctantly compelled to take steps."

Now the stringers of the ship are long iron girders, so to speak, that run lengthways from stern to bow. They keep the iron frames (what are called ribs in a wooden ship) in place, and also help to hold the ends of the deck-beams, which go from side to side of the ship. Stringers always consider themselves most important, because they are so long.

"You will take steps — will you?" This was a

long echoing rumble. It came from the frames — scores and scores of them, each one about eighteen inches distant from the next, and each riveted to the stringers in four places. "We think you will have a certain amount of trouble in *that;*" and thousands and thousands of the little rivets that held everything together whispered: "You will. You will! Stop quivering and be quiet. Hold on, brethren! Hold on! Hot Punches! What 's that?"

Rivets have no teeth, so they cannot chatter with fright; but they did their best as a fluttering jar swept along the ship from stern to bow, and she shook like a rat in a terrier's mouth.

An unusually severe pitch, for the sea was rising, had lifted the big throbbing screw nearly to the surface, and it was spinning round in a kind of soda-water — half sea and half air — going much faster than was proper, because there was no deep water for it to work in. As it sank again, the engines — and they were triple expansion, three cylinders in a row — snorted through all their three pistons. "Was that a joke, you fellow outside? It 's an uncommonly poor one. How are we to do our work if you fly off the handle that way?"

"I did n't fly off the handle," said the screw, twirling huskily at the end of the screw-shaft. "If I had, you 'd have been scrap-iron by this time. The sea dropped away from under me, and I had nothing to catch on to. That 's all."

"That 's all, d 'you call it?" said the thrust-block whose business it is to take the push of the screw; for if a screw had nothing to hold it back it would crawl right into the engine-room. (It is the holding back of the screwing action that gives the drive to a ship.) "I know I do my work deep down and out of sight, but I warn you I expect justice. All I ask for is bare justice. Why can't you push steadily and evenly instead of whizzing like a whirligig, and making me hot under all my collars." The thrust-block had six collars, each faced with brass, and he did not wish to get them heated.

All the bearings that supported the fifty feet of screw-shaft as it ran to the stern whispered: "Justice — give us justice."

"I can only give you what I can get," the screw answered. "Look out! It 's coming again!"

He rose with a roar as the *Dimbula* plunged, and "whack — flack— whack — whack" went the engines, furiously, for they had little to check them.

"I 'm the noblest outcome of human ingenuity — Mr. Buchanan says so," squealed the high-pressure cylinder. "This is simply ridiculous!" The piston went up savagely, and choked, for half the steam behind it was mixed with dirty water. "Help! Oiler! Fitter! Stoker! Help! I 'm choking," it gasped. "Never in the history of maritime invention has such a calamity overtaken one so young and strong. And if I go, who 's to drive the ship?"

"Hush! oh, hush!" whispered the Steam, who, of course, had been to sea many times before. He used to spend his leisure ashore in a cloud, or a gutter, or a flower-pot, or a thunder-storm, or anywhere else where water was needed. "That 's only a little priming, a little carrying-over, as they call it. It 'll happen all night, on and off. I don't say it 's nice, but it 's the best we can do under the circumstances."

"What difference can circumstances make? I 'm here to do my work — on clean, dry steam. Blow circumstances!" the cylinder roared.

"The circumstances will attend to the blowing. I 've worked on the North Atlantic run a good many times — it 's going to be rough before morning."

"It is n't distressingly calm now," said the extra-strong frames — they were called web-frames — in the engine-room. "There 's an upward thrust that we don't understand, and there 's a twist that is very bad for our brackets and diamond-plates, and there 's a sort of west-north-westerly pull that follows the twist, which seriously annoys us. We mention this because we happened to cost a good deal of money, and we feel sure that the owner would not approve of our being treated in this frivolous way."

"I 'm afraid the matter is out of owner's hands for the present," said the Steam, slipping into the condenser. "You 're left to your own devices till the weather betters."

"I would n't mind the weather," said a flat

bass voice below; "it 's this confounded cargo that 's breaking my heart. I 'm the garboard-strake, and I 'm twice as thick as most of the others, and I ought to know something."

The garboard-strake is the lowest plate in the bottom of a ship, and the *Dimbula's* garboard-strake was nearly three-quarters of an inch mild steel.

"The sea pushes me up in a way I should never have expected," the strake grunted, "and the cargo pushes me down, and, between the two, I don't know what I 'm supposed to do."

"When in doubt, hold on," rumbled the Steam, making head in the boilers.

"Yes; but there 's only dark, and cold, and hurry, down here; and how do I know whether the other plates are doing their duty? Those bulwark-plates up above, I 've heard, ain't more than five-sixteenths of an inch thick — scandalous, I call it."

"I agree with you," said a huge web-frame by the main cargo-hatch. He was deeper and thicker than all the others, and curved half-way across the ship in the shape of half an arch, to support the deck where deck beams would have been in the way of cargo coming up and down. "I work entirely unsupported, and I observe that I am the sole strength of this vessel, so far as my vision extends. The responsibility, I assure you, is enormous. I believe the money-value of the cargo is over one hundred and fifty thousand pounds. Think of that!"

"And every pound of it is dependent on my personal exertions." Here spoke a sea-valve that communicated directly with the water outside, and was seated not very far from the garboard-strake. "I rejoice to think that I am a Prince-Hyde Valve, with best Para rubber facings. Five patents cover me — I mention this without pride — five separate and several patents, each one finer than the other. At present I am screwed fast. Should I open, you would immediately be swamped. This is incontrovertible!"

Patent things always use the longest words they can. It is a trick that they pick up from their inventors.

"That 's news," said a big centrifugal bilge-pump. "I had an idea that you were employed to clean decks and things with. At least, I 've used you for that more than once. I forget the precise number, in thousands, of gallons which I am guaranteed to throw per hour; but I assure you, my complaining friends, that there is not the least danger. I alone am capable of clearing any water that may find its way here. By my Biggest Deliveries, we pitched then!"

The sea was getting up in workmanlike style. It was a dead westerly gale, blown from under a ragged opening of green sky, narrowed on all sides by fat, gray clouds; and the wind bit like pincers as it fretted the spray into lacework on the flanks of the waves.

"I tell you what it is," the foremast telephoned down its wire-stays. "I 'm up here, and I can take a dispassionate view of things. There 's an organized conspiracy against us. I 'm sure of it, because every single one of these waves is heading directly for our bows. The whole sea is concerned in it — and so 's the wind. It 's awful!"

"What 's awful?" said a wave, drowning the capstan for the hundredth time.

"This organized conspiracy on your part," the capstan gurgled, taking his cue from the mast.

"Organized bubbles and spindrift! There has been a depression in the Gulf of Mexico. Excuse me!" He leaped overside; but his friends took up the tale one after another.

"Which has advanced ——" That wave hove green water over the funnel.

"As far as Cape Hatteras ——" He drenched the bridge.

"And is now going out to sea — to sea — to sea!" The third went free in three surges, making a clean sweep of a boat, which turned bottom up and sank in the darkening troughs alongside, while the broken falls whipped the davits.

"That 's all there is to it," seethed the white water roaring through the scuppers. "There 's no animus in our proceedings. We 're only meteorological corollaries."

"Is it going to get any worse?" said the bow-

anchor, chained down to the deck, where he could only breathe once in five minutes.

"Not knowing, can't say. Wind may blow a bit by midnight. Thanks awfully. Good-bye."

The wave that spoke so politely had travelled some distance aft, and found itself all mixed up on the deck amidships, which was a well-deck sunk between high bulwarks. One of the bulwark plates, which was hung on hinges to open outward, had swung out, and passed the bulk of the water back to the sea again with a clean smack.

"Evidently that 's what I 'm made for," said the plate, closing again with a sputter of pride. "Oh, no, you don't my friend!"

The top of a wave was trying to get in from the outside, but as the plate did not open in that direction, the defeated water spurted back.

"Not bad for five-sixteenths of an inch," said the bulwark-plate. "My work, I see, is laid down for the night"; and it began opening and shutting, as it was designed to do, with the motion of the ship.

"We are not what you might call idle," groaned all the frames together, as the *Dimbula* climbed a big wave, lay on her side at the top, and shot into the next hollow, twisting in the descent. A huge swell pushed up exactly under her middle, and her bow and stern hung free with nothing to support them. Then one joking wave caught her up at the bow, and another at the stern, while the rest of the water slunk

away from under her just to see how she would like it; so she was held up at her two ends only, and the weight of the cargo and the machinery fell on the groaning iron keels and bilge-stringers.

"Ease off! Ease off, there!" roared the garboard-strake. "I want one-eighth of an inch fair play. D' you hear me, you rivets!"

"Ease off! Ease off!" cried the bilge-stringers. "Don't hold us so tight to the frames!"

"Ease off!" grunted the deck-beams, as the *Dimbula* rolled fearfully. "You 've cramped our knees into the stringers, and we can't move. Ease off, you flat-headed little nuisances."

Then two converging seas hit the bows, one on each side, and fell away in torrents of streaming thunder.

"Ease off!" shouted the forward collision-bulkhead. "I want to crumple up, but I 'm stiffened in every direction. Ease off, you dirty little forge-filings. Let me breathe!"

All the hundreds of plates that are riveted to the frames, and make the outside skin of every steamer, echoed the call, for each plate wanted to shift and creep a little, and each plate, according to its position, complained against the rivets.

"We can't help it! *We* can't help it!" they murmured in reply. "We 're put here to hold you, and we 're going to do it; you never pull us twice in the same direction. If you 'd say what

you were going to do next, we 'd try to meet your views."

"As far as I could feel," said the upper-deck planking, and that was four inches thick, "every single iron near me was pushing or pulling in opposite directions. Now, what 's the sense of that? My friends, let us all pull together."

"Pull any way you please," roared the funnel, "so long as you don't try your experiments on *me*. I need fourteen wire ropes, all pulling in different directions, to hold me steady. Is n't that so?"

"We believe you, my boy!" whistled the funnel-stays through their clinched teeth, as they twanged in the wind from the top of the funnel to the deck.

"Nonsense! We must all pull together," the decks repeated. "Pull lengthways."

"Very good," said the stringers; "then stop pushing sideways when you get wet. Be content to run gracefully fore and aft, and curve in at the ends as we do."

"No — no curves at the end! A very slight workmanlike curve from side to side, with a good grip at each knee, and little pieces welded on," said the deck-beams.

"Fiddle!" cried the iron pillars of the deep, dark hold. "Who ever heard of curves? Stand up straight; be a perfectly round column, and carry tons of good solid weight — like that! There!" A big sea smashed on the deck above, and the pillars stiffened themselves to the load.

"Straight up and down is not bad," said the frames, who ran that way in the sides of the ship, "but you must also expand yourselves sideways. Expansion is the law of life, children. Open out! open out!"

"Come back!" said the deck-beams, savagely, as the upward heave of the sea made the frames try to open. "Come back to your bearings, you slack-jawed irons!"

"Rigidity! Rigidity! Rigidity!" thumped the engines. "Absolute, unvarying rigidity — rigidity!"

"You see!" whined the rivets, in chorus. "No two of you will ever pull alike, and — and you blame it all on us. We only know how to go through a plate and bite down on both sides so that it can't, and must n't, and shan't move."

"I 've got one-fraction of an inch play, at any rate," said the garboard-strake, triumphantly. So he had, and all the bottom of the ship felt the easier for it.

"Then we 're no good," sobbed the bottom rivets. "We were ordered — we were ordered — never to give; and we 've given, and the sea will come in, and we 'll all go to the bottom together! First we 're blamed for everything unpleasant, and now we have n't the consolation of having done our work."

"Don't say I told you," whispered the Steam, consolingly; "but, between you and me and the

last cloud I came from, it was bound to happen sooner or later. You *had* to give a fraction, and you 've given without knowing it. Now, hold on, as before."

"What 's the use?" a few hundred rivets chattered. "We 've given — we 've given; and the sooner we confess that we can't keep the ship together, and go off our little heads, the easier it will be. No rivet forged can stand this strain."

"No one rivet was ever meant to. Share it among you," the Steam answered.

"The others can have my share. I 'm going to pull out," said a rivet in one of the forward plates.

"If you go, others will follow," hissed the Steam. "There 's nothing so contagious in a boat as rivets going. Why, I knew a little chap like you — he was an eighth of an inch fatter, though — on a steamer — to be sure, she was only twelve hundred tons, now I come to think of it — in exactly the same place as you are. He pulled out in a bit of a bobble of a sea, not half as bad as this, and he started all his friends on the same butt-strap, and the plates opened like a furnace door, and I had to climb into the nearest fog-bank, while the boat went down."

"Now that 's peculiarly disgraceful," said the rivet. "Fatter than me, was he, and in a steamer not half our tonnage? Reedy little peg! I blush for the family, sir." He settled himself more

firmly than ever in his place, and the Steam chuckled.

"You see," he went on, quite gravely, "a rivet, and especially a rivet in your position, is really the one indispensable part of the ship."

The Steam did not say that he had whispered the very same thing to every single piece of iron aboard. There is no sense in telling too much truth.

And all that while the little *Dimbula* pitched and chopped, and swung and slewed, and lay down as though she were going to die, and got up as though she had been stung, and threw her nose round and round in circles half a dozen times as she dipped; for the gale was at its worst. It was inky black, in spite of the tearing white froth on the waves, and, to top everything, the rain began to fall in sheets, so that you could not see your hand before your face. This did not make much difference to the ironwork below, but it troubled the foremast a good deal.

"Now it 's all finished," he said dismally. "The conspiracy is too strong for us. There is nothing left but to ——"

"*Hurraar! Brrrraaah! Brrrrrp!* roared the Steam through the fog-horn, till the decks quivered. "Don't be frightened, below. It 's only me, just throwing out a few words, in case any one happens to be rolling round to-night."

"You don't mean to say there 's any one except

us on the sea in such weather?" said the funnel in a husky snuffle.

"Scores of 'em," said the Steam, clearing its throat; "*Rrrrrraaa! Brraaaaa! Prrrrp!* It 's a trifle windy up here; and, Great Boilers! how it rains!"

"We 're drowning," said the scuppers. They had been doing nothing else all night, but this steady thrash of rain above them seemed to be the end of the world.

"That 's all right. We 'll be easier in an hour or two. First the wind and then the rain: Soon you may make sail again! *Grrraaaaaah! Drrrraaaa! Drrrp!* I have a notion that the sea is going down already. If it does you 'll learn something about rolling. We 've only pitched till now. By the way, are n't you chaps in the hold a little easier than you were?"

There was just as much groaning and straining as ever, but it was not so loud or squeaky in tone; and when the ship quivered she did not jar stiffly, like a poker hit on the floor, but gave with a supple little waggle, like a perfectly balanced golf-club.

"We have made a most amazing discovery," said the stringers, one after another. "A discovery that entirely changes the situation. We have found, for the first time in the history of ship-building, that the inward pull of the deck-beams and the outward thrust of the frames locks us, as it were, more

closely in our places, and enables us to endure a strain which is entirely without parallel in the records of marine architecture."

The Steam turned a laugh quickly into a roar up the fog-horn. "What massive intellects you great stringers have," he said softly, when he had finished.

"We also," began the deck-beams, "are discoverers and geniuses. We are of opinion that the support of the hold-pillars materially helps us. We find that we lock up on them when we are subjected to a heavy and singular weight of sea above."

Here the *Dimbula* shot down a hollow, lying almost on her side — righting at the bottom with a wrench and a spasm.

"In these cases — are you aware of this, Steam? — the plating at the bows, and particularly at the stern —we would also mention the floors beneath us — help *us* to resist any tendency to spring." The frames spoke, in the solemn, awed voice which people use when they have just come across something entirely new for the very first time.

"I 'm only a poor puffy little flutterer," said the Steam, "but I have to stand a good deal of pressure in my business. It 's all tremendously interesting. Tell us some more. You fellows are so strong."

"Watch us and you 'll see," said the bow-plates, proudly. "Ready, behind there! Here s' the Father and Mother of Waves coming! Sit tight, rivets all!" A great sluicing comber thundered by, but through

the scuffle and confusion the Steam could hear the low, quick cries of the ironwork as the various strains took them — cries like these: "Easy, now — easy! *Now* push for all your strength! Hold out! Give a fraction! Hold up! Pull in! Shove crossways! Mind the strain at the ends! Grip, now! Bite tight! Let the water get away from under — and there she goes!"

The wave raced off into the darkness, shouting, "Not bad, that, if it 's your first run!" and the drenched and ducked ship throbbed to the beat of the engines inside her. All three cylinders were white with the salt spray that had come down through the engine-room hatch; there was white fur on the canvas-bound steam-pipes, and even the bright-work deep below was speckled and soiled; but the cylinders had learned to make the most of steam that was half water, and were pounding along cheerfully.

"How 's the noblest outcome of human ingenuity hitting it?" said the Steam, as he whirled through the engine-room.

"Nothing for nothing in this world of woe," the cylinders answered, as though they had been working for centuries, "and precious little for seventy-five pounds' head. We 've made two knots this last hour and a quarter! Rather humiliating for eight hundred horse-power, is n't it?"

"Well, it 's better than drifting astern, at any rate. You seem rather less — how shall I put it? — stiff in the back than you were."

"If you 'd been hammered as we 've been this night, you would n't be stiff — iff — iff, either. Theoreti — retti — retti — cally, of course, rigidity is the thing. Purrr — purr — practically, there has to be a little give and take. *We* found that out by working on our sides for five minutes at a stretch — chch — chh. How 's the weather?"

"Sea 's going down fast," said the Steam.

"Good business," said the high-pressure cylinder. "Whack her up, boys. They 've given us five pounds more steam"; and he began humming the first bars of "Said the Young Obadiah to the Old Obadiah," which, as you may have noticed, is a pet tune among engines not built for high speed. Racing-liners with twin-screws sing "The Turkish Patrol" and the overture to the "Bronze Horse," and "Madame Angot," till something goes wrong, and then they render Gounod's "Funeral March of a Marionette" with variations.

"You 'll learn a song of your own some fine day," said the Steam, as he flew up the fog-horn for one last bellow.

Next day the sky cleared and the sea dropped a little, and the *Dimbula* began to roll from side to side till every inch of iron in her was sick and giddy. But luckily they did not all feel ill at the same time: otherwise she would have opened out like a wet paper box.

The Steam whistled warnings as he went about his

business: it is in this short, quick roll and tumble that follows a heavy sea that most of the accidents happen, for then everything thinks that the worst is over and goes off guard. So he orated and chattered till the beams and frames and floors and stringers and things had learned how to lock down and lock up on one another, and endure this new kind of strain.

They found ample time to practise, for they were sixteen days at sea, and it was foul weather till within a hundred miles of New York. The *Dimbula* picked up her pilot and came in covered with salt and red rust. Her funnel was dirty gray from top to bottom; two boats had been carried away; three copper ventilators looked like hats after a fight with the police; the bridge had a dimple in the middle of it; the house that covered the steam steering-gear was split as with hatchets; there was a bill for small repairs in the engine-room almost as long as the screw-shaft; the forward cargo-hatch fell into bucket-staves when they raised the iron cross-bars; and the steam-capstan had been badly wrenched on its bed. Altogether, as the skipper said, it was "a pretty general average."

"But she 's soupled," he said to Mr. Buchanan. "For all her dead weight she rode like a yacht. Ye mind that last blow off the Banks? I am proud of her, Buck."

"It 's vera good," said the chief engineer, looking

along the dishevelled decks. "Now, a man judgin' superfeecially would say we were a wreck, but we know otherwise — by experience."

Naturally everything in the *Dimbula* fairly stiffened with pride, and the foremast and the forward collision-bulkhead who are pushing creatures, begged the Steam to warn the Port of New York of their arrival. "Tell those big boats all about us," they said. "They seem to take us quite as a matter of course."

It was a glorious, clear, dead calm morning, and in single file, with less than half a mile between each, their bands playing and their tugboats shouting and waving handkerchiefs, were the *Majestic*, the *Paris*, the *Touraine*, the *Servia*, the *Kaiser Wilhelm II.*, and the *Werkendam*, all statelily going out to sea. As the *Dimbula* shifted her helm to give the great boats clear way, the Steam (who knows far too much to mind making an exhibition of himself now and then) shouted:

"Oyez! Oyez! Oyez! Princes, Dukes, and Barons of the High Seas! Know ye by these presents, we are the *Dimbula*, fifteen days nine hours from Liverpool, having crossed the Atlantic with four thousand ton of cargo for the first time in our career! We have not foundered. We are here. *'Eer! 'Eer!* We are not disabled. But we have had a time wholly unparalleled in the annals of ship-building! Our decks were swept! We pitched; we rolled! We

thought we were going to die! *Hi! Hi!* But we did n't. We wish to give notice that we have come to New York all the way across the Atlantic through the worst weather in the world; and we are the *Dimbula!* We are — arr — ha — ha — ha-r-r-r!"

The beautiful line of boats swept by as steadily as the procession of the Seasons. The *Dimbula* heard the *Majestic* say, "Hmph!" and the *Paris* grunted, "How!" and the *Touraine* said, "Oui!" with a little coquettish flicker of steam; and the *Servia said*, "Haw!" and the *Kaiser* and the *Werkendam* said, "Hoch!" Dutch fashion — and that was absolutely all.

"I did my best," said the Steam, gravely, "but I don't think they were much impressed with us, somehow. Do you?"

"It 's simply disgusting," said the bow-plates. "They might have seen what we 've been through. There is n't a ship on the sea that has suffered as we have — is there, now?"

"Well, I would n't go so far as that," said the Steam, "because I 've worked on some of those boats, and sent them through weather quite as bad as the fortnight that we 've had, in six days; and some of them are a little over ten thousand tons, I believe. Now I 've seen the *Majestic*, for instance, ducked from her bows to her funnel; and I 've helped the *Arizona*, I think she was, to back off an iceberg she

met with one dark night; and I had to run out of the *Paris's* engine-room, one day, because there was thirty foot of water in it. Of course, I don't deny ——"

The Steam shut off suddenly, as a tug-boat, loaded with a political club and a brass band, that had been to see a New York Senator off to Europe, crossed their bows, going to Hoboken. There was a long silence that reached, without a break, from the cut-water to the propeller-blades of the *Dimbula.*

Then a new, big voice said slowly and thickly, as though the owner had just waked up: "It 's mv conviction that I have made a fool of myself."

The Steam knew what had happened at once for when a ship finds herself all the talking of the separate pieces ceases and melts into one voice, which is the soul of the ship.

"Who are you?" he said, with a laugh.

"I am the *Dimbula*, of course. I 've never been anything else except that — and a fool!"

The tugboat, which was doing its very best to be run down, got away just in time, its band playing clashily and brassily a popular but impolite air:

In the days of old Rameses — are you on?
In the days of old Rameses — are you on?
In the days of old Rameses,
That story had paresis,
Are you on — are you on — are you on?

"Well, I 'm glad you 've found yourself," said the Steam. "To tell the truth I was a little tired of talking to all those ribs and stringers. Here 's Quarantine. After that we 'll go to our wharf and clean up a little, and — next month we 'll do it all over again."

I

A TRIP ACROSS A CONTINENT*

Harvey N. Cheyne, a spoiled darling, "perhaps fifteen years old," "an American — first, last, and all the time," had "staggered over the wet decks to the nearest rail," after trying to smoke a "Wheeling stogie." "He was fainting from seasickness, and a roll of the ship tilted him over the rail," where a "gray mother-wave tucked him under one arm." He was picked up by the fishing schooner *We're Here*, and after many marvellous experiences among the sailors arrived in port, a happier and wiser fellow. His telegram to his father brings the following result.

CHEYNE was flying to meet the only son, so miraculously restored to him. The bear was seeking his cub, not the bulls. Hard men who had their knives drawn to fight for their financial lives put away the weapons and wished him God-speed, while half a dozen panic-smitten tin-pot roads perked up their heads and spoke of the wonderful things they would have done had not Cheyne buried the hatchet.

It was a busy week-end among the wires; for, now that their anxiety was removed, men and cities hastened to accommodate. Los Angeles called to San Diego and Barstow that the Southern California engineers might know and be ready in their lonely roundhouses; Barstow passed the word to the Atlantic and Pacific; and Albuquerque flung it the whole length of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fé

*A selection from "Captains Courageous," copyrighted by The Century Company.

management, even into Chicago. An engine, combination-car with crew, and the great and gilded "Constance" private car were to be "expedited" over those two thousand three hundred and fifty miles. The train would take precedence of one hundred and seventy-seven others meeting and passing; despatchers and crews of every one of those said trains must be notified. Sixteen locomotives; sixteen engineers, and sixteen firemen would be needed — each and every one the best available. Two and one-half minutes would be allowed for changing engines, three for watering, and two for coaling. "Warn the men, and arrange tanks and chutes accordingly; for Harvey Cheyne is in a hurry, a hurry — hurry," sang the wires. "Forty miles an hour will be expected, and division superintendents will accompany this special over their respective divisions. From San Diego to Sixteenth Street, Chicago, let the magic carpet be laid down. Hurry! oh, hurry!"

"It will be hot," said Cheyne, as they rolled out of San Diego in the dawn of Sunday. "We 're going to hurry, mamma, just as fast as ever we can; but I really don't think there 's any good in your putting on your bonnet and gloves yet. You 'd much better lie down and take your medicine. I 'd play you a game o' dominoes, but it 's Sunday."

"I 'll be good. Oh, I *will* be good. Only —

taking off my bonnet makes me feel as if we 'd never get there."

"Try to sleep a little, mamma, and we 'll be in Chicago before you know."

"But it 's Boston, father. Tell them to hurry."

The six-foot drivers were hammering their way to San Bernardino and the Mohave wastes, but this was no grade for speed. That would come later. The heat of the desert followed the heat of the hills as they turned east to the Needles and the Colorado River. The car cracked in the utter drought and glare, and they put crushed ice to Mrs. Cheyne's neck, and toiled up the long, long grades, past Ash Fork, toward Flagstaff, where the forests and quarries are, under the dry, remote skies. The needle of the speed-indicator flicked and wagged to and fro, the cinders rattled on the roof, and a whirl of dust sucked after the whirling wheels. The crew of the combination sat on their bunks, panting in their shirt-sleeves, and Cheyne found himself among them shouting old, old stories of the railroad that every trainman knows, above the roar of the car. He told them about his son, and how the sea had given up its dead, and they nodded and spat and rejoiced with him; asked after "her, back there," and whether she could stand it if the engineer "let her out a piece," and Cheyne thought she could. Accordingly the great fire-horse was "let out" from Flagstaff to Winslow, till a division superintendent protested.

But Mrs. Cheyne, in the boudoir stateroom, where the French maid, sallow-white with fear, clung to the silver door-handle, only moaned a little and begged her husband to bid them "hurry." And so they dropped the dry sands and moon-struck rocks of Arizona behind them, and grilled on till the crash of the couplings and the wheeze of the brake-hose told them they were at Coolidge by the Continental Divide.

Three bold and experienced men — cool, confident, and dry when they began; white, quivering, and wet when they finished their trick at those terrible wheels — swung her over the great lift from Albuquerque to Glorietta and beyond Springer, up and up to the Raton Tunnel on the State line, whence they dropped rocking into La Junta, had sight of the Arkansaw, and tore down the long slope to Dodge City, where Cheyne took comfort once again from setting his watch an hour ahead.

There was very little talk in the car. The secretary and typewriter sat together on the stamped Spanish-leather cushions by the plate-glass observation-window at the rear end, watching the surge and ripple of the ties crowded back behind them, and, it is believed, making notes of the scenery. Cheyne moved nervously between his own extravagant gorgeousness and the naked necessity of the combination, an unlit cigar in his teeth, till the pitying crews forgot that he was their tribal enemy, and did their best to entertain him.

At night the bunched electrics lit up that distressful palace of all the luxuries, and they fared sumptuously, swinging on through the emptiness of abject desolation. Now they heard the swish of a water-tank, and the guttural voice of a Chinaman, the clink-clink of hammers that tested the Krupp steel wheels, and the oath of a tramp chased off the rear-platform; now the solid crash of coal shot into the tender; and now a beating back of noises as they flew past a waiting train. Now they looked out into great abysses, a trestle purring beneath their tread, or up to rocks that barred out half the stars. Now scaur and ravine changed and rolled back to jagged mountains on the horizon's edge, and now broke into hills lower and lower, till at last came the true plains.

At Dodge City an unknown hand threw in a copy of a Kansas paper containing some sort of an interview with Harvey, who had evidently fallen in with an enterprising reporter, telegraphed on from Boston. The joyful journalese revealed that it was beyond question their boy, and it soothed Mrs. Cheyne for a while. Her one word "hurry" was conveyed by the crews to the engineers at Nickerson, Topeka, and Marceline, where the grades are easy, and they brushed the Continent behind them. Towns and villages were close together now, and a man could feel here that he moved among people.

"I can't see the dial, and my eyes ache so. What are we doing?"

"The very best we can, mamma. There 's no sense in getting in before the Limited. We 'd only have to wait."

"I don't care. I want to feel we 're moving. Sit down and tell me the miles."

Cheyne sat down and read the dial for her (there were some miles which stand for records to this day), but the seventy-foot car never changed its long steamer-like roll, moving through the heat with the hum of a giant bee. Yet the speed was not enough for Mrs. Cheyne; and the heat, the remorseless August heat, was making her giddy; the clock-hands would not move, and when, oh, when would they be in Chicago?

It is not true that, as they changed engines at Fort Madison, Cheyne passed over to the Amalgamated Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers an endowment sufficient to enable them to fight him and his fellows on equal terms for evermore. He paid his obligations to engineers and firemen as he believed they deserved, and only his bank knows what he gave the crews who had sympathized with him. It is on record that the last crew took entire charge of switching operations at Sixteenth Street, because "she" was in a doze at last, and Heaven was to help any one who bumped her.

Now the highly paid specialist who conveys the

Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Limited from Chicago to Elkhart is something of an autocrat, and he does not approve of being told how to back up to a car. None the less he handled the "Constance" as if she might have been a load of dynamite, and when the crew rebuked him they did it in whispers and dumb show.

"Pshaw!" said the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fé men, discussing life later, "we were n't runnin' for a record. Harvey Cheyne's wife, she was sick back, an' we did n't want to jounce her. Come to think of it, our runnin' time from San Diego to Chicago was 57.54. You can tell that to them Eastern way-trains. When we 're tryin' for a record, we 'll let you know."

To the Western man (though this would not please either city) Chicago and Boston are cheek by jowl, and some railroads encourage the delusion. The Limited whirled the "Constance" into Buffalo and the arms of the New York Central and Hudson River (illustrious magnates with white whiskers and gold charms on their watch-chains boarded her here to talk a little business to Cheyne), who slid her gracefully into Albany, where the Boston and Albany completed the run from tide-water to tide-water — total time, eighty-seven hours and thirty-five minutes, or three days, fifteen hours and one half. Harvey was waiting for them.

II

THE CHILDREN OF THE ZODIAC*

"It 's too hard," said the Big Boy. "I don't know what 'Zodiac' means." "I will hunt up the words for you in the dictionary," said the Little Girl. And when they came to the next story the Boy took pleasure in doing his own hunting in the dictionary.

Though thou love her as thyself,
As a self of purer clay,
Though her parting dim the day,
Stealing grace from all alive,
Heartily know
When half Gods go
The gods arrive. — *Emerson.*

THOUSANDS of years ago, when men were greater than they are to-day, the Children of the Zodiac lived in the world. There were six Children of the Zodiac — the Ram, the Bull, the Lion, the Twins, and the Girl; and they were afraid of the Six Houses which belonged to the Scorpion, the Balance, the Crab, the Fishes, the Goat, and the Waterman. Even when they first stepped down upon the earth and knew that they were immortal Gods, they carried this fear with them; and the fear grew as they became better acquainted with mankind and heard stories of the Six Houses. Men treated the Children as Gods and came to them with prayers

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and long stories of wrong, while the Children of the Zodiac listened and could not understand.

A mother would fling herself before the feet of the Twins, or the Bull, crying: "My husband was at work in the fields and the Archer shot him and he died; and my son will also be killed by the Archer. Help me!" The Bull would lower his huge head and answer: "What is that to me?" Or the Twins would smile and continue their play, for they could not understand why the water ran out of people's eyes. At other times a man and a woman would come to Leo or the Girl crying: "We two are newly married and we are very happy. Take these flowers." As they threw the flowers they would make mysterious sounds to show that they were happy, and Leo and the Girl wondered even more than the Twins why people shouted "Ha! ha! ha!" for no cause.

This continued for thousands of years by human reckoning, till on a day, Leo met the Girl walking across the hills and saw that she had changed entirely since he had last seen her. The Girl, looking at Leo, saw that he too had changed altogether. Then they decided that it would be well never to separate again, in case even more startling changes should occur when the one was not at hand to help the other. Leo kissed the Girl and all Earth felt that kiss, and the Girl sat down on a hill and the water ran out of her eyes; and this had never hap-

pened before in the memory of the Children of the Zodiac.

As they sat together a man and a woman came by, and the man said to the woman:

"What is the use of wasting flowers on those dull Gods. They will never understand, darling."

The Girl jumped up and put her arms around the woman, crying, "I understand. Give me the flowers and I will give you a kiss."

Leo said beneath his breath to the man: "What was the new name that I heard you give to your woman just now?"

The man answered, "Darling, of course."

"Why, of course," said Leo; "and if of course, what does it mean?"

"It means 'very dear,' and you have only to look at your wife to see why."

"I see," said Leo; "you are quite right;" and when the man and the woman had gone on he called the Girl "darling wife"; and the Girl wept again from sheer happiness.

"I think," she said at last, wiping her eyes, "I think that we two have neglected men and women too much. What did you do with the sacrifices they made to you, Leo?"

"I let them burn," said Leo. "I could not eat them. What did you do with the flowers?"

"I let them wither. I could not wear them, I

had so many of my own," said the Girl, "and now I am sorry."

"There is nothing to grieve for," said Leo; "we belong to each other."

As they were talking the years of men's life slipped by unnoticed, and presently the man and the woman came back, both white-headed, the man carrying the woman.

"We have come to the end of things," said the man quietly. "This that was my wife ——"

"As I am Leo's wife," said the Girl quickly, her eyes staring.

" — was my wife, has been killed by one of your Houses." The man set down his burden, and laughed.

"Which House?" said Leo angrily, for he hated all the Houses equally.

"You are Gods, you should know," said the man. "We have lived together and loved one another, and I have left a good farm for my son: what have I to complain of except that I still live?"

As he was bending over his wife's body there came a whistling through the air, and he started and tried to run away, crying, "It is the arrow of the Archer. Let me live a little longer — only a little longer!" The arrow struck him and he died. Leo looked at the Girl, and she looked at him, and both were puzzled.

"He wished to die," said Leo. "He said that he

wished to die, and when Death came he tried to run away. He is a coward."

"No, he is not," said the Girl; "I think I feel what he felt. Leo, we must learn more about this for their sakes."

"For *their* sakes," said Leo, very loudly.

"Because *we* are never going to die," said the Girl and Leo together, still more loudly.

"Now sit you still here, darling wife," said Leo, "while I go to the Houses whom we hate, and learn how to make these men and women live as we do."

"And love as we do?" said the Girl.

"I do not think they need to be taught that," said Leo, and he strode away very angry, with his lion-skin swinging from his shoulder, till he came to the House where the Scorpion lives in the darkness, brandishing his tail over his back.

"Why do you trouble the children of men?" said Leo, with his heart between his teeth.

"Are you so sure that I trouble the children of men alone?" said the Scorpion. "Speak to your brother the Bull, and see what he says."

"I come on behalf of the children of men," said Leo. "I have learned to love as they do, and I wish them to live as I — as we — do."

"Your wish was granted long ago. Speak to the Bull. He is under my special care," said the Scorpion.

Leo dropped back to the earth again, and saw the

great star Aldebaran, that is set in the forehead of the Bull, blazing very near to the earth. When he came up to it he saw that his brother, the Bull, yoked to a countryman's plough, was toiling through a wet rice-field with his head bent down, and the sweat streaming from his flanks. The countryman was urging him forward with a goad.

"Gore that insolent to death," cried Leo, "and for the sake of our family honour come out of the mire."

"I cannot," said the Bull, "the Scorpion has told me that some day, of which I cannot be sure, he will sting me where my neck is set on my shoulders, and that I shall die bellowing."

"What has that to do with this disgraceful exhibition?" said Leo, standing on the dyke that bounded the wet field.

"Everything. This man could not plough without my help. He thinks that I am a stray bullock."

"But he is a mud-crusted cottar with matted hair," insisted Leo. "We are not meant for his use."

"You may not be; I am. I cannot tell when the Scorpion may choose to sting me to death — perhaps before I have turned this furrow." The Bull flung his bulk into the yoke, and the plough tore through the wet ground behind him, and the countryman goaded him till his flanks were red.

"Do you like this?" Leo called down the dripping furrows.

"No," said the Bull over his shoulder as he lifted his hind legs from the clinging mud and cleared his nostrils.

Leo left him scornfully and passed to another country, where he found his brother the Ram in the centre of a crowd of country people who were hanging wreaths round his neck and feeding him on freshly plucked green corn.

"This is terrible," said Leo. "Break up that crowd and come away, my brother. Their hands are spoiling your fleece."

"I cannot," said the Ram. "The Archer told me that on some day of which I had no knowledge, he would send a dart through me, and that I should die in very great pain."

"What has that to do with this?" said Leo, but he did not speak as confidently as before.

"Everything in the world," said the Ram. "These people never saw a perfect sheep before. They think that I am a stray, and they will carry me from place to place as a model to all their flocks."

"But they are greasy shepherds, we are not intended to amuse them," said Leo.

"You may not be; I am," said the Ram. "I cannot tell when the Archer may choose to send his arrow at me — perhaps before the people a mile down the road have seen me." The Ram lowered his head that a yokel newly arrived might throw a

wreath of wild garlic-leaves over it, and waited patiently while the farmers tugged his fleece.

"Do you like this?" cried Leo over the shoulders of the crowd.

"No," said the Ram, as the dust of the trampling feet made him sneeze, and he snuffed at the fodder piled before him.

Leo turned back, intending to retrace his steps to the Houses, but as he was passing down a street he saw two small children, very dusty, rolling outside a cottage door, and playing with a cat. They were the Twins.

"What are you doing here?" said Leo, indignant.

"Playing," said the Twins calmly.

"Cannot you play on the banks of the Milky Way?" said Leo.

"We did," said they, "till the Fishes swam down and told us that some day they would come for us and not hurt us at all and carry us away. So now we are playing at being babies down here. The people like it."

"Do you like it?" said Leo.

"No," said the Twins, "but there are no cats in the Milky Way," and they pulled the cat's tail thoughtfully. A woman came out of the doorway and stood behind them, and Leo saw in her face a look that he had sometimes seen in the Girl's.

"She thinks that we are foundlings," said the Twins, and they trotted indoors to the evening meal.

Then Leo hurried as swiftly as possible to all the Houses one after another; for he could not understand the new trouble that had come to his brethren. He spoke to the Archer, and the Archer assured him that so far as that House was concerned Leo had nothing to fear. The Waterman, the Fishes, and the Goat, gave the same answer. They knew nothing of Leo, and cared less. They were the Houses, and they were busied in killing men.

At last he came to that very dark House where Cancer the Crab lies so still that you might think he was asleep if you did not see the ceaseless play and winnowing motion of the feathery branches round his mouth. That movement never ceases. It is like the eating of a smothered fire into rotten timber in that it is noiseless and without haste.

Leo stood in front of the Crab, and the half darkness allowed him a glimpse of that vast blue-black back, and the motionless eyes. Now and again he thought that he heard some one sobbing, but the noise was very faint.

"Why do you trouble the children of men?" said Leo. There was no answer, and against his will Leo cried, "Why do you trouble us? What have we done that you should trouble us?"

This time Cancer replied, "What do I know or care? You were born into my House, and at the appointed time I shall come for you."

"When is the appointed time?" said Leo,

stepping back from the restless movement of the mouth.

"When the full moon fails to call the full tide," said the Crab, "I shall come for the one. When the other has taken the earth by the shoulders, I shall take that other by the throat."

Leo lifted his hand to the apple of his throat, moistened his lips, and recovering himself, said:

"Must I be afraid for two, then?"

"For two," said the Crab, "and as many more as may come after."

"My brother, the Bull, had a better fate," said Leo, sullenly. "He is alone."

A hand covered his mouth before he could finish the sentence, and he found the Girl in his arms. Womanlike, she had not stayed where Leo had left her, but had hastened off at once to know the worst, and passing all the other Houses, had come straight to Cancer.

"That is foolish," said the Girl whispering. "I have been waiting in the dark for long and long before you came. *Then* I was afraid. But now ——" She put her head down on his shoulder and sighed a sigh of contentment.

"I am afraid now," said Leo.

"That is on my account," said the Girl. "I know it is, because I am afraid for your sake. Let us go, husband."

They went out of the darkness together and came

back to the Earth, Leo very silent, and the Girl striving to cheer him. "My brother's fate is the better one," Leo would repeat from time to time, and at last he said: "Let us each go our own way and live alone till we die. We were born into the House of Cancer, and he will come for us."

"I know; I know. But where shall I go? And where will you sleep in the evening? But let us try. I will stay here. Do you go on."

Leo took six steps forward very slowly, and three long steps backward very quickly, and the third step set him again at the Girl's side. This time it was she who was begging him to go away and leave her, and he was forced to comfort her all through the night. That night decided them both never to leave each other for an instant, and when they had come to this decision they looked back at the darkness of the House of Cancer high above their heads, and with their arms round each other's necks laughed, "Ha! ha! ha!" exactly as the children of men laughed. And that was the first time in their lives that they had ever laughed.

Next morning they returned to their proper home and saw the flowers and the sacrifices that had been laid before their doors by the villlagers of the hills. Leo stamped down the fire with his heel and the Girl flung the flower-wreaths out of sight, shuddering as she did so. When the villagers re-returned, as of custom, to see what had become of

their offerings, they found neither roses nor burned flesh on the altars, but only a man and a woman, with frightened white faces sitting hand in hand on the altar-steps.

"Are you not Virgo?" said a woman to the Girl. "I sent you flowers yesterday."

"Little sister," said the Girl, flushing to her forehead, "do not send any more flowers, for I am only a woman like yourself." The man and the woman went away doubtfully.

"Now, what shall we do?" said Leo.

"We must try to be cheerful, I think," said the Girl. "We know the very worst that can happen to us, but we do not know the best that love can bring us. We have a great deal to be glad of."

"The certainty of death?" said Leo.

"All the children of men have that certainty also; yet they laughed long before we ever knew how to laugh. We must learn to laugh, Leo. We have laughed once, already."

People who consider themselves Gods, as the Children of the Zodiac did, find it hard to laugh, because the Immortals know nothing worth laughter or tears. Leo rose up with a very heavy heart, and he and the girl together went to and fro among men; their new fear of death behind them. First they laughed at a naked baby attempting to thrust its fat toes into its foolish pink mouth; next they laughed at a kitten chasing her own tail; and

then they laughed at a boy trying to steal a kiss from a girl, and getting his ears boxed. Lastly, they laughed because the wind blew in their faces as they ran down a hill-side together, and broke panting and breathless into a knot of villagers at the bottom. The villagers laughed, too, at their flying clothes and wind-reddened faces; and in the evening gave them food and invited them to a dance on the grass, where everybody laughed through the mere joy of being able to dance.

That night Leo jumped up from the Girl's side crying: "Every one of those people we met just now will die ——"

"So shall we," said the Girl sleepily. "Lie down again, dear." Leo could not see that her face was wet with tears.

But Leo was up and far across the fields, driven forward by the fear of death for himself and for the Girl, who was dearer to him than himself. Presently he came across the Bull drowsing in the moonlight after a hard day's work, and looking through half-shut eyes at the beautiful straight furrows that he had made.

"Ho!" said the Bull. "So you have been told these things too. Which of the Houses holds your death?"

Leo pointed upward to the dark House of the Crab and groaned. "And he will come for the Girl too," he said.

"Well," said the Bull, "what will you do?"

Leo sat down on the dike and said that he did not know.

"You cannot pull a plough," said the Bull, with a little touch of contempt. "I can, and that prevents me from thinking of the Scorpion."

Leo was angry, and said nothing till the dawn broke, and the cultivator came to yoke the Bull to his work.

"Sing," said the Bull, as the stiff, muddy ox-bow creaked and strained. "My shoulder is galled. Sing one of the songs that we sang when we thought we were all Gods together."

Leo stepped back into the canebrake, and lifted up his voice in a song of the Children of the Zodiac — the war-whoop of the young Gods who are afraid of nothing. At first he dragged the song along unwillingly, and then the song dragged him, and his voice rolled across the fields, and the Bull stepped to the tune, and the cultivator banged his flanks out of sheer light-heartedness, and the furrows rolled away behind the plough more and more swiftly. Then the Girl came across the fields looking for Leo, and found him singing in the cane. She joined her voice to his, and the cultivator's wife brought her spinning into the open and listened with all her children round her. When it was time for the nooning, Leo and the Girl had sung themselves both thirsty and hungry, but the cultiva-

tor and his wife gave them rye bread and milk, and many thanks; and the Bull found occasion to say:

"You have helped me to do a full half field more than I should have done. But the hardest part of the day is to come, brother."

Leo wished to lie down and brood over the words of the Crab. The Girl went away to talk to the cultivator's wife and baby, and the afternoon ploughing began.

"Help us now," said the Bull. "The tides of the day are running down. My legs are very stiff. Sing, if you never sang before."

"To a mud-spattered villager?" said Leo.

"He is under the same doom as ourselves. Are you a coward?" said the Bull.

Leo flushed, and began again with a sore throat and a bad temper. Little by little he dropped away from the songs of the Children and made up a song as he went along; and this was a thing he could never have done had he not met the Crab face to face. He remembered facts concerning cultivators and bullocks and rice-fields that he had not particularly noticed before the interview, and he strung them all together, growing more interested as he sang, and he told the cultivator much more about himself and his work than the cultivator knew. The Bull grunted approval as he toiled down the furrows for the last time that day, and the song ended, leav-

ing the cultivator with a very good opinion of himself in his aching bones. The Girl came out of the hut where she had been keeping the children quiet, and talking woman-talk to the wife, and they all ate the evening meal together.

"Now yours must be a very pleasant life," said the cultivator; "sitting as you do on a dyke all day and singing just what comes into your head. Have you been at it long, you two — gipsies?"

"Ah!" lowed the Bull from his byre. "That 's all the thanks you will ever get from men, brother."

"No. We have only just begun it," said the Girl; "but we are going to keep to it as long as we live. Are we not, Leo?"

"Yes," said he; and they went away hand in hand.

"You can sing beautifully, Leo," said she, as a wife will to her husband.

"What were you doing?" said he.

"I was talking to the mother and the babies," she said. "You would not understand the little things that make us women laugh."

"And — and I am to go on with this — this gipsy work?" said Leo.

"Yes, dear, and I will help you."

There is no written record of the life of Leo and of the Girl, so we cannot tell how Leo took to his new employment which he detested. We are only sure that the Girl loved him when and wherever

he sang; even when, after the song was done, she went round with the equivalent of a tambourine and collected the pence for the daily bread. There were times, too, when it was Leo's very hard task to console the Girl for the indignity of horrible praise that people gave him and her — for the silly wagging peacock feathers that they stuck in his cap, and the buttons and pieces of cloth that they sewed on his coat. Woman-like, she could advise and help to the end, but the meanness of the means revolted.

"What does it matter," Leo would say, "so long as the songs make them a little happier?" And they would go down the road and begin again on the old, old refrain — that whatever came or did not come the children of men must not be afraid. It was heavy teaching at first, but in process of years Leo discovered that he could make men laugh and hold them listening to him even when the rain fell. Yet there were people who would sit down and cry softly, though the crowd was yelling with delight, and there were people who maintained that Leo made them do this; and the Girl would talk to them in the pauses of the performance and do her best to comfort them. People would die, too, while Leo was talking and singing and laughing; for the Archer and the Scorpion and the Crab and the other Houses were as busy as ever. Sometimes the crowd broke, and were frightened, and Leo strove to keep them steady by telling them that this was cowardly;

and sometimes they mocked at the Houses that were killing them, and Leo explained that this was even more cowardly than running away.

In their wanderings they came across the Bull, or the Ram, or the Twins, but all were too busy to do more than nod to each other across the crowd, and go on with their work. As the years rolled on even that recognition ceased, for the Children of the Zodiac had forgotten that they had ever been Gods working for the sake of men. The star Aldebaran was crusted with caked dirt on the Bull's forehead, the Ram's fleece was dusty and torn, and the Twins were only babies fighting over the cat on the doorstep. It was then that Leo said, "Let us stop singing and making jokes." And it was then that the Girl said, "No." But she did not know why she said "No" so energetically. Leo maintained that it was perversity, till she herself, at the end of a dusty day, made the same suggestion to him, and he said, "Most certainly not!" and they quarrelled miserably between the hedgerows, forgetting the meaning of the stars above them. Other singers and other talkers sprang up in the course of the years, and Leo, forgetting that there could never be too many of these, hated them for dividing the applause of the children of men, which he thought should be all his own. The Girl would grow angry too, and then the songs would be broken, and the jests fall flat for weeks to come, and the children of men would shout: "Go

home, you two gipsies. Go home and learn something worth singing!"

After one of these sorrowful, shameful days, the Girl, walking by Leo's side through the fields, saw the full moon coming up over the trees, and she clutched Leo's arm, crying: "The time has come now. Oh, Leo, forgive me!"

"What is it?" said Leo. He was thinking of the other singers.

"My husband!" she answered, and she laid his hand upon her breast, and the breast that he knew so well was hard as stone. Leo groaned, remembering what the Crab had said.

"Surely we were Gods once," he cried.

"Surely we are Gods still," said the Girl. "Do you not remember when you and I went to the House of the Crab and — were not very much afraid? And since then . . . we have forgotten what we were singing for — we sang for the pence, and, oh, we fought for them! — We, who are the Children of the Zodiac!"

"It was my fault," said Leo.

"How can there be any fault of yours that is not mine too?" said the Girl. "My time has come, but you will live longer, and . . ." The look in her eyes said all she could not say.

"Yes, I will remember that we are Gods," said Leo.

It is very hard, even for a child of the Zodiac who

has forgotten his Godhead, to see his wife dying slowly, and to know that he cannot help her. The Girl told Leo in those last months of all that she had said and done among the wives and the babies at the back of the roadside performances, and Leo was astonished that he knew so little of her who had been so much to him. When she was dying she told him never to fight for pence or quarrel with the other singers; and, above all, to go on with his singing immediately after she was dead.

Then she died, and after he had buried her he went down the road to a village that he knew, and the people hoped that he would begin quarrelling with a new singer that had sprung up while he had been away. But Leo called him "my brother." The new singer was newly married — and Leo knew it — and when he had finished singing Leo straightened himself, and sang the "Song of the Girl," which he had made coming down the road. Every man who was married, or hoped to be married, whatever his rank or colour, understood that song — even the bride leaning on the new husband's arm understood it too — and presently when the song ended, and Leo's heart was bursting in him, the men sobbed. "That was a sad tale," they said at last, "now make us laugh." Because Leo had known all the sorrow that a man could know, including the full knowledge of his own fall who had once been a God — he, changing his song quickly, made the people laugh till

they could laugh no more. They went away feeling ready for any trouble in reason, and they gave Leo more peacock feathers and pence than he could count. Knowing that pence led to quarrels and that peacock feathers were hateful to the Girl, he put them aside and went away to look for his brothers, to remind them that they too were Gods.

He found the Bull goring the undergrowth in a ditch, for the Scorpion had stung him, and he was dying, not slowly, as the Girl had died, but quickly.

"I know all," the Bull groaned, as Leo came up. "I had forgotten, too, but I remember now. Go and look at the fields I ploughed. The furrows are straight. I forgot that I was a God, but I drew the plough perfectly straight, for all that. And you, brother?"

"I am not at the end of the ploughing," said Leo. "Does Death hurt?"

"No; but dying does," said the Bull, and he died. The cultivator who then owned him was much annoyed, for there was a field still unploughed.

It was after this that Leo made the Song of the Bull who had been a God and forgotten the fact, and he sang it in such a manner that half the young men in the world conceived that they too might be Gods without knowing it. A half of that half grew impossibly conceited, and died early. A half of the remainder strove to be Gods and failed, but the

other half accomplished four times more work than they would have done under any other delusion.

Later, years later, always wandering up and down, and making the children of men laugh, he found the Twins sitting on the bank of a stream waiting for the Fishes to come and carry them away. They were not in the least afraid, and they told Leo that the woman of the House had a real baby of her own, and that when that baby grew old enough to be mischievous he would find a well-educated cat waiting to have its tail pulled. Then the Fishes came for them, but all that the people saw was two children drowning in a brook; and though their foster-mother was very sorry, she hugged her own real baby to her breast, and was grateful that it was only the foundlings.

Then Leo made the Song of the Twins who had forgotten that they were Gods, and had played in the dust to amuse a foster-mother. That song was sung far and wide among the women. It caused them to laugh and cry and hug their babies closer to their hearts all in one breath; and some of the women who remembered the Girl said: "Surely that is the voice of Virgo. Only she could know so much about ourselves."

After those three songs were made, Leo sang them over and over again, till he was in danger of looking upon them as so many mere words, and the people who listened grew tired, and there came back

to Leo the old temptation to stop singing once and for all. But he remembered the Girl's dying words and went on.

One of his listeners interrupted him as he was singing. "Leo," said he, "I have heard you telling us not to be afraid for the past forty years. Can you not sing something new now?"

"No," said Leo; "it is the only song that I am allowed to sing. You must not be afraid of the Houses, even when they kill you."

The man turned to go, wearily, but there came a whistling through the air, and the arrow of the Archer was seen skimming low above the earth, pointing to the man's heart. He drew himself up, and stood still waiting till the arrow struck home.

"I die," he said, quietly. "It is well for me, Leo, that you sang for forty years."

"Are you afraid?" said Leo, bending over him.

"I am a man, not a God," said the man. "I should have run away but for your Songs. My work is done, and I die without making a show of my fear."

"I am very well paid," said Leo to himself. "Now that I see what my songs are doing, I will sing better ones."

He went down the road, collected his little knot of listeners, and began the Song of the Girl. In the middle of his singing he felt the cold touch of the Crab's claw on the apple of his throat. He lifted his hand, choked, and stopped for an instant.

"Sing on, Leo," said the crowd. "The old song runs as well as ever it did."

Leo went on steadily till the end, with the cold fear at his heart. When his song was ended, he felt the grip on his throat tighten. He was old, he had lost the Girl, he knew that he was losing more than half his power to sing, he could scarcely walk to the diminishing crowds that waited for him, and could not see their faces when they stood about him. None the less he cried angrily to the Crab:

"Why have you come for me *now?*"

"You were born under my care. How can I help coming for you?" said the Crab, wearily. Every human being whom the Crab killed had asked that same question.

"But I was just beginning to know what my songs were doing," said Leo.

"Perhaps that is why," said the Crab, and the grip tightened.

"You said you would not come till I had taken the world by the shoulders," gasped Leo, falling back.

"I always keep my word. You have done that three times, with three songs. What more do you desire?"

"Let me live to see the world know it," pleaded Leo. "Let me be sure that my songs ——"

"Make men brave?" said the Crab. "Even then there would be one man who was afraid. The Girl was braver than you are. Come."

Leo was standing close to the restless, insatiable mouth. "I forgot," said he, simply. "The Girl was braver. But I am a God too, and I am not afraid."

"What is that to me?" said the Crab.

Then Leo's speech was taken from him, and he lay still and dumb, watching Death till he died.

Leo was the last of the Children of the Zodiac. After his death there sprang up a breed of little mean men, whimpering and flinching and howling because the Houses killed them and theirs, who wished to live forever without any pain. They did not increase their lives, but they increased their own torments miserably, and there were no Children of the Zodiac to guide them, and the greater part of Leo's songs were lost.

Only he had carved on the Girl's tombstone the last verse of the Song of the Girl, which stands at the head of this story.

One of the children of men, coming thousands of years later, rubbed away the lichen, read the lines, and applied them to a trouble other than the one Leo meant. Being a man, men believed that he had made the verses himself; but they belong to Leo, the Child of the Zodiac, and teach, as he taught, that what comes or does not come, we must not be afraid.

III

THE BRIDGE BUILDERS

THE least that Findlayson, of the Public Works Department, expected was a C.I.E.; he dreamed of a C.S.I.: indeed his friends told him that he deserved more. For three years he had endured heat and cold, disappointment, discomfort, danger, and disease, with responsibility almost too heavy for one pair of shoulders; and day by day, through that time, the great Kashi Bridge over the Ganges had grown under his charge. Now, in less than three months, if all went well, His Excellency the Viceroy would open the bridge in state, an archbishop would bless it, the first train-load of soldiers would come over it, and there would be speeches.

Findlayson, C. E., sat in his trolley on a construction-line that ran along one of the main revetments — the huge, stone-faced banks that flared away north and south for three miles on either side of the river — and permitted himself to think of the end. With its approaches, his work was one mile and three-quarters in length; a lattice-girder bridge, trussed with the Findlayson truss, standing on seven-and-twenty brick piers. Each one of those piers was twenty-four feet in diameter, capped with red Agra

stone and sunk eighty feet below the shifting sand of the Ganges' bed. Above them ran the railway-line fifteen feet broad; above that, again, a cart-road of eighteen feet, flanked with footpaths. At either end rose towers of red brick, loopholed for musketry and pierced for big guns, and the ramp of the road was being pushed forward to their haunches. The raw earth-ends were crawling and alive with hundreds upon hundreds of tiny asses climbing out of the yawning borrow-pit below with sackfuls of stuff; and the hot afternoon air was filled with the noise of hooves, the rattle of the drivers' sticks, and the swish and roll-down of the dirt. The river was very low, and on the dazzling white sand between the three centre piers stood squat cribs of railway-sleepers, filled within and daubed without with mud, to support the last of the girders as those were riveted up. In the little deep water left by the drought, an overhead-crane travelled to and fro along its spile-pier, jerking sections of iron into place, snorting and backing and grunting as an elephant grunts in the timber-yard. Riveters by the hundred swarmed about the lattice side-work and the iron roof of the railway-line, hung from invisible staging under the bellies of the girders, clustered round the throats of the piers, and rode on the overhang of the foot-path-stanchions; their fire-pots and the spurts of flame that answered each hammer-stroke showing no more than pale yellow in the sun's glare. East

and west and north and south the construction-trains rattled and shrieked up and down the embankments, the piled trucks of brown and white stone banging behind them till the side-boards were unpinned, and with a roar and a grumble a few thousand tons more material were thrown out to hold the river in place.

Findlayson, C. E., turned on his trolley and looked over the face of the country that he had changed for seven miles around. Looked back on the humming village of five thousand workmen; up stream and down, along the vista of spurs and sand; across the river to the far piers, lessening in the haze; overhead to the guard-towers — and only he knew how strong those were — and with a sigh of contentment saw that his work was good. There stood his bridge before him in the sunlight, lacking only a few weeks' work on the girders of the three middle piers — his bridge, raw and ugly as original sin, but *pukka* — permanent — to endure when all memory of the builder, yea, even of the splendid Findlayson truss, had perished. Practically, the thing was done.

Hitchcock, his assistant, cantered along the line on a little switch-tailed Kabuli pony, who, through long practice, could have trotted securely over a trestle, and nodded to his chief.

"All but," said he, with a smile.

"I 've been thinking about it," the senior answered 'Not half a bad job for two men, is it?"

"One — and a half. 'Gad, what a Cooper's Hill cub I was when I came on the works!" Hitchcock felt very old in the crowded experiences of the past three years, that had taught him power and responsibility.

"You *were* rather a colt," said Findlayson. "I wonder how you 'll like going back to office work when this job 's over."

"I shall hate it!" said the young man, and as he went on his eye followed Findlayson's, and he muttered, "Is n't it good?"

"I think we 'll go up the service together," Findlayson said to himself. "You 're too good a youngster to waste on another man. Cub thou wast; assistant thou art. Personal assistant, and at Simla, thou shalt be, if any credit comes to me out of the business!"

Indeed, the burden of the work had fallen altogether on Findlayson and his assistant, the young man whom he had chosen because of his rawness to break to his own needs. There were labour-contractors by the half-hundred — fitters and riveters, European, borrowed from the railway workshops, with perhaps twenty white and half-caste subordinates to direct, under direction, the bevies of workmen — but none knew better than these two, who trusted each other, how the underlings were not to be trusted. They had been tried many times in sudden crises — by slipping of booms, by breaking of

tackle, failure of cranes, and the wrath of the river — but no stress had brought to light any man among them whom Findlayson and Hitchcock would have honoured by working as remorselessly as they worked themselves. Findlayson thought it over from the beginning: the months of office work destroyed at a blow when the Government of India, at the last moment, added two feet to the width of the bridge, under the impression that bridges were cut out of paper, and so brought to ruin at least half an acre of calculations — and Hitchcock, new to disappointment, buried his head in his arms and wept; the heart-breaking delays over the filling of the contracts in England; the futile correspondences hinting at great wealth of commission if one, only one, rather doubtful consignment were passed; the war that followed the refusal; the careful, polite obstruction at the other end that followed the war, till young Hitchcock, putting one month's leave to another month, and borrowing ten days from Findlayson, spent his poor little savings of a year in a wild dash to London, and there, as his own tongue asserted, and the later consignments proved, put the Fear of God into a man so great that he feared only Parliament, and said so till Hitchcock wrought with him across his own dinner-table, and — he feared the Kashi Bridge and all who spoke in its name. Then there was the cholera that came in the night to the village by the bridge-works; and after

the cholera smote the smallpox. The fever they had always with them. Hitchcock had been appointed a magistrate of the third class with whipping powers, for the better government of the community, and Findlayson watched him wield his powers temperately, learning what to overlook and what to look after. It was a long, long reverie, and it covered storm, sudden freshets, death in every manner and shape, violent and awful rage against red tape half frenzying a mind that knows it should be busy on other things; drought, sanitation, finance; birth, wedding, burial, and riot in the village of twenty warring castes; argument, expostulation, persuasion, and the blank despair that a man goes to bed upon, thankful that his rifle is all in pieces in the gun-case. Behind everything rose the black frame of the Kashi Bridge — plate by plate, girder by girder, span by span —and each pier of it recalled Hitchcock, the all-round man, who had stood by his chief without failing from the very first to this last. So the bridge was two men's work — unless one counted Peroo, as Peroo certainly counted himself. He was a lascar, a Kharva from Bulsar, familiar with every port between Rockhampton and London, who had risen to the rank of serang on the British India boats, but wearying of routine musters and clean clothes, had thrown up the service and gone inland, where men of his calibre were sure of employment. For his knowledge of tackle and the handling of

heavy weights, Peroo was worth almost any price he might have chosen to put upon his services; but custom decreed the wage of the overhead-men, and Peroo was not within many silver pieces of his proper value. Neither running water nor extreme heights made him afraid; and, as an ex-serang, he knew how to hold authority. No piece of iron was so big or so badly placed that Peroo could not devise a tackle to lift it — a loose-ended, sagging arrangement, rigged with a scandalous amount of talking, but perfectly equal to the work in hand. It was Peroo who had saved the girder of Number Seven Pier from destruction when the new wire rope jammed in the eye of the crane, and the huge plate tilted in its slings, threatening to slide out sideways. Then the native workmen lost their heads with great shoutings, and Hitchcock's right arm was broken by a falling T-plate, and he buttoned it up in his coat and swooned, and came to and directed for four hours till Peroo, from the top of the crane reported, "All 's well," and the plate swung home. There was no one like Peroo, serang, to lash and guy and hold, to control the donkey-engines, to hoist a fallen locomotive craftily out of the borrow-pit into which it had tumbled; to strip and dive, if need be, to see how the concrete blocks round the piers stood the scouring of Mother Gunga, or to adventure up-stream on a monsoon night and report on the state of the embankment-facings. He would inter-

rupt the field-councils of Findlayson and Hitchcock without fear, till his wonderful English, or his still more wonderful *lingua-franca*, half Portuguese and half Malay, ran out and he was forced to take string and show the knots that he would recommend. He controlled his own gang of tacklemen — mysterious relatives from Kutch Mandvi gathered month by month and tried to the uttermost. No consideration of family or kin allowed Peroo to keep weak hands or a giddy head on the pay-roll. "My honour is the honour of this bridge," he would say to the about-to-be dismissed. "What do I care for your honour? Go and work on a steamer. That is all you are fit for."

The little cluster of huts where he and his gang lived centred round the tattered dwelling of a sea-priest — one who had never set foot on Black Water, but had been chosen as ghostly counsellor by two generations of sea-rovers, all unaffected by port missions or those creeds which are thrust upon sailors by agencies along Thames' bank. The priest of the lascars had nothing to do with their caste, or indeed with anything at all. He ate the offerings of his church, and slept and smoked, and slept again, "for," said Peroo, who had haled him a thousand miles inland, "he is a very holy man. He never cares what you eat so long as you do not eat beef, and that is good, because on land we worship Shiva, we Kharvas; but at sea on the Kumpani's boats we

attend strictly to the orders of the Burra Malum (the first mate), and on this bridge we observe what Finlinson Sahib says."

Findlayson Sahib had that day given orders to clear the scaffolding from the guard-tower on the right bank, and Peroo with his mates was casting loose and lowering down the bamboo poles and planks as swiftly as ever they had whipped the cargo out of a coaster.

From his trolley he could hear the whistle of the serang's silver pipe and the creak and clatter of the pulleys. Peroo was standing on the topmost coping of the tower, clad in the blue dungaree of his abandoned service, and as Findlayson motioned to him to be careful, for his was no life to throw away, he gripped the last pole, and, shading his eyes ship-fashion, answered with the long-drawn wail of the fo'c'sle look-out: "*Ham dekhta hai*" ("I am looking out"). Findlayson laughed, and then sighed. It was years since he had seen a steamer, and he was sick for home. As his trolley passed under the tower, Peroo descended by a rope, ape-fashion, and cried: "It looks well now, Sahib. Our bridge is all but done. What think you Mother Gunga will say when the rail runs over?"

"She has said little so far. It was never Mother Gunga that delayed us."

"There is always time for her; and none the less there has been delay. Has the Sahib forgotten last

autumn's flood, when the stone-boats were sunk without warning — or only a half-day's warning?"

"Yes, but nothing save a big flood could hurt us now. The spurs are holding well on the west bank."

"Mother Gunga eats great allowances. There is always room for more stone on the revetments. I tell this to the Chota Sahib" — he meant Hitchcock — "and he laughs."

"No matter, Peroo. Another year thou wilt be able to build a bridge in thine own fashion."

The lascar grinned. "Then it will not be in this way — with stonework sunk under water, as the *Quetta* was sunk. I like sus-sus-pen-sheen bridges that fly from bank to bank, with one big step, like a gang-plank. Then no water can hurt. When does the Lord Sahib come to open the bridge?"

"In three months, when the weather is cooler."

"Ho! ho! He is like the Burra Malum. He sleeps below while the work is being done. Then he comes upon the quarter-deck and touches with his finger and says: "This is not clean! Jiboon-wallah!'"

"But the Lord Sahib does not call me a jiboon-wallah, Peroo."

"No, Sahib; but he does not come on deck till the work is all finished. Even the Burra Malum of the *Nerbudda* said once at Tuticorin ——"

"Bah! Go! I am busy."

"I, also!" said Peroo, with an unshaken counte-

nance. "May I take the light dinghy now and row along the spurs?"

"To hold them with thy hands? They are, I think, sufficiently heavy."

"Nay, Sahib. It is thus. At sea, on the Black Water, we have room to be blown up and down without care. Here we have no room at all. Look you, we have put the river into a dock, and run her between stone sills."

Findlayson smiled at the "we."

"We have bitted and bridled her. She is not like the sea, that can beat against a soft beach. She is Mother Gunga — in irons." His voice fell a little.

"Peroo, thou hast been up and down the world more even than I. Speak true talk, now. How much dost thou in thy heart believe of Mother Gunga?"

"All that our priest says. London is London, Sahib. Sydney is Sydney, and Port Darwin is Port Darwin. Also Mother Gunga is Mother Gunga, and when I come back to her banks I know this and worship. In London I did poojah to the big temple by the river for the sake of the God within. . . . Yes, I will not take the cushions in the dinghy."

Findlayson mounted his horse and trotted to the shed of a bungalow that he shared with his assistant. The place had become home to him in the last three years. He had grilled in the heat, sweated in the

rains, and shivered with fever under the rude thatch roof; the lime-wash beside the door was covered with rough drawings and formulæ, and the sentry-path trodden in the matting of the veranda showed where he had walked alone. There is no eight-hour limit to an engineer's work, and the evening meal with Hitchcock was eaten booted and spurred: over their cigars they listened to the hum of the village as the gangs came up from the river-bed and the lights began to twinkle.

"Peroo has gone up the spurs in your dinghy. He 's taken a couple of nephews with him, and he 's lolling in the stern like a commodore," said Hitchcock.

"That 's all right. He 's got something on his mind. You 'd think that ten years in the British India boats would have knocked most of his religion out of him."

"So it has," said Hitchcock, chuckling. "I overheard him the other day in the middle of a most atheistical talk with that fat old *guru* of theirs. Peroo denied the efficacy of prayer; and wanted the *guru* to go to sea and watch a gale out with him, and see if he could stop a monsoon."

"All the same, if you carried off his *guru* he 'd leave us like a shot. He was yarning away to me about praying to the dome of St. Paul's when he was in London."

"He told me that the first time he went into the

engine-room of a steamer, when he was a boy, he prayed to the low-pressure cylinder."

"Not half bad a thing to pray to, either. He 's propitiating his own Gods now, and he wants to know what Mother Gunga will think of a bridge being run across her. Who 's there?" A shadow darkened the doorway, and a telegram was put into Hitchcock's hand.

"She ought to be pretty well used to it by this time. Only a *tar*. It ought to be Ralli 's answer about the new rivets. . . . Great Heavens!" Hitchcock jumped to his feet.

"What is it?" said the senior, and took the form. "*That 's* what Mother Gunga thinks, is it," he said, reading. "Keep cool, young 'un. We 've got all our work cut out for us. Let 's see. Muir wires, half an hour ago: '*Floods on the Ramgunga. Look out.*' Well, that gives us — one, two — nine and a half for the flood to reach Melipur Ghaut and seven 's sixteen and a half to Latodi — say fifteen hours before it comes down to us."

"Curse that hill-fed sewer of a Ramgunga! Findlayson, this is two months before anything could have been expected, and the left bank is littered up with stuff still. Two full months before the time!"

"That 's why it happens. I 've only known Indian rivers for five and twenty years, and I don't pretend to understand. Here comes another *tar*." Findlayson opened the telegram. "Cockran, this

time, from the Ganges Canal: '*Heavy rains here. Bad.*' He might have saved the last word. Well, we don't want to know any more. We 've got to work the gangs all night and clean up the river-bed. You 'll take the east bank and work out to meet me in the middle. Get everything that floats below the bridge: we shall have quite enough river-craft coming down adrift anyhow, without letting the stone-boats ram the piers. What have you got on the east bank that needs looking after?"

"Pontoon, one big pontoon with the overhead crane on it. T'other overhead crane on the mended pontoon, with the cart-road rivets from Twenty to Twenty-three piers — two construction lines, and a turning-spur. The pile-work must take its chance," said Hitchcock.

"All right. Roll up everything you can lay hands on. We 'll give the gang fifteen minutes more to eat their grub."

Close to the veranda stood a big night-gong, never used except for flood, or fire in the village. Hitchcock had called for a fresh horse, and was off to his side of the bridge when Findlayson took the cloth-bound stick and smote with the rubbing stroke that brings out the full thunder of the metal.

Long before the last rumble ceased every night-gong in the village had taken up the warning. To these were added the hoarse screaming of conches in the little temples; the throbbing of drums and tom-

toms; and from the European quarters, where the riveters lived, McCartney's bugle, a weapon of offence on Sundays and festivals, brayed desperately, calling to "Stables." Engine after engine toiling home along the spurs after her day's work whistled in answer till the whistles were answered from the far bank. Then the big gong thundered thrice for a sign that it was flood and not fire; conch, drum, and whistle echoed the call, and the village quivered to the sound of bare feet running upon soft earth. The order in all cases was to stand by the day's work and wait instructions. The gangs poured by in the dusk; men stopping to knot a loin-cloth or fasten a sandal; gang-foremen shouting to their subordinates as they ran or paused by the tool-issue sheds for bars and mattocks; locomotives creeping down their tracks wheel-deep in the crowd, till the brown torrent disappeared into the dusk of the river-bed, raced over the pilework, swarmed along the lattices, clustered by the cranes, and stood still, each man in his place.

Then the troubled beating of the gong carried the order to take up everything and bear it beyond high-water mark, and the flare-lamps broke out by the hundred between the webs of dull iron as the riveters began a night's work racing against the flood that was to come. The girders of the three centre piers — those that stood on the cribs — were all but in position. They needed just as many rivets as

could be driven into them, for the flood would assuredly wash out the supports, and the iron-work would settle down on the caps of stone if they were not blocked at the ends. A hundred crowbars strained at the sleepers of the temporary line that fed the unfinished piers. It was heaved up in lengths, loaded into trucks, and backed up the bank beyond flood-level by the groaning locomotives. The tool-sheds on the sands melted away before the attack of shouting armies, and with them went the stacked ranks of Government stores, iron-bound boxes of rivets, pliers, cutters, duplicate parts of the rivet-machines, spare pumps and chains. The big crane would be the last to be shifted, for she was hoisting all the heavy stuff up to the main structure of the bridge. The concrete blocks on the fleet of stone-boats were dropped overside, where there was any depth of water, to guard the piers, and the empty boats themselves were poled under the bridge down-stream. It was here that Peroo's pipe shrilled loudest, for the first stroke of the big gong had brought aback the dinghy at racing speed, and Peroo and his people were stripped to the waist, working for the honour and credit which are better than life.

"I knew she would speak," he cried. "*I* knew, but the telegraph gave us good warning. O sons of unthinkable begetting — children of unspeakable shame — are we here for the look of the thing?" It was two feet of wire rope frayed at the ends, and

it did wonders as Peroo leaped from gunnel to gunnel, shouting the language of the sea.

Findlayson was more troubled for the stone-boats than anything else. McCartney, with his gangs, was blocking up the ends of the three doubtful spans, but boats adrift, if the flood chanced to be a high one, might endanger the girders; and there was a very fleet in the shrunken channels.

"Get them behind the swell of the guard-tower," he shouted down to Peroo. "It will be dead-water there; get them below the bridge."

"*Accha!* [Very good.] *I* know. We are mooring them with wire rope," was the answer. "Hah! Listen to the Chota Sahib. He is working hard."

From across the river came an almost continuous whistling of locomotives, backed by the rumble of stone. Hitchcock at the last minute was spending a few hundred more trucks of Tarakee stone in reinforcing his spurs and embankments.

"The bridge challenges Mother Gunga," said Peroo, with a laugh. "But when *she* talks I know whose voice will be the loudest."

For hours the naked men worked, screaming and shouting under the lights. It was a hot, moonless night; the end of it was darkened by clouds and a sudden squall that made Findlayson very grave.

"She moves!" said Peroo, just before the dawn. "Mother Gunga is awake! Hear!" He dipped his hand over the side of a boat and the current mumbled

on it. A little wave hit the side of a pier with a crisp slap.

"Six hours before her time," said Findlayson, mopping his forehead savagely. "Now we can't depend on anything. We 'd better clear all hands out of the river-bed."

Again the big gong beat, and a second time there was the rushing of naked feet on earth and ringing iron; the clatter of tools ceased. In the silence, men heard the dry yawn of water crawling over thirsty sand.

Foreman after foreman shouted to Findlayson, who had posted himself by the guard-tower, that his section of the river-bed had been cleaned out, and when the last voice dropped Findlayson hurried over the bridge till the iron plating of the permanent way gave place to the temporary plank-walk over the three centre piers, and there he met Hitchcock.

"All clear your side?" said Findlayson. The whisper rang in the box of latticework.

"Yes, and the east channel 's filling now. We 're utterly out of our reckoning. When is this thing down on us?"

"There 's no saying. She 's filling as fast as she can. Look!" Findlayson pointed to the planks below his feet, where the sand, burned and defiled by months of work, was beginning to whisper and fizz.

"What orders?" said Hitchcock.

"Call the roll — count stores — sit on your hunkers — and pray for the bridge. That 's all I can think of. Good night. Don't risk your life trying to fish out anything that may go downstream."

"Oh, I 'll be as prudent as you are! 'Night. Heavens, how she 's filling! Here 's the rain in earnest!" Findlayson picked his way back to his bank, sweeping the last of M'Cartney's riveters before him. The gangs had spread themselves along the embankments, regardless of the cold rain of the dawn, and there they waited for the flood. Only Peroo kept his men together behind the swell of the guard-tower, where the stone-boats lay tied fore and aft with hawsers, wire-ropes, and chains.

A shrill wail ran along the line, growing to a yell, half fear and half wonder: the face of the river whitened from bank to bank between the stone facings, and the far-away spurs went out in spouts of foam. Mother Gunga had come bank-high in haste, and a wall of chocolate-coloured water was her messenger. There was a shriek above the roar of the water, the complaint of the spans coming down on their blocks as the cribs were whirled out from under their bellies. The stone-boats groaned and ground each other in the eddy that swung round the abutment, and their clumsy masts rose higher and higher against the dim sky-line.

"Before she was shut between these walls we knew

what she would do. Now she is thus cramped God only knows what she will do!" said Peroo, watching the furious turmoil round the guard-tower. "Ohé! Fight, then! Fight hard, for it is thus that a woman wears herself out."

But Mother Gunga would not fight as Peroo desired. After the first down-stream plunge there came no more walls of water, but the river lifted herself bodily, as a snake when she drinks in midsummer, plucking and fingering along the revetments, and banking up behind the piers till even Findlayson began to recalculate the strength of his work.

When day came the village gasped. "Only last night," men said, turning to each other, "it was as a town in the river-bed! Look now!"

And they looked and wondered afresh at the deep water, the racing water that licked the throat of the piers. The farther bank was veiled by rain, into which the bridge ran out and vanished; the spurs upstream were marked by no more than eddies and spoutings, and down-stream the pent river, once freed of her guide-lines, had spread like a sea to the horizon. Then hurried by, rolling in the water, dead men and oxen together, with here and there a patch of thatched roof that melted when it touched a pier.

"Big flood," said Peroo, and Findlayson nodded. It was as big a flood as he had any wish to watch.

His bridge would stand what was upon her now, but not very much more; and if by any of a thousand chances there happened to be a weakness in the embankments, Mother Gunga would carry his honour to the sea with the other raffle. Worst of all, there was nothing to do except to sit still; and Findlayson sat still under his macintosh till his helmet became pulp on his head, and his boots were over ankle in mire. He took no count of time, for the river was marking the hours, inch by inch and foot by foot, along the embankment, and he listened, numb and hungry, to the straining of the stone-boats, the hollow thunder under the piers, and the hundred noises that make the full note of a flood. Once a dripping servant brought him food, but he could not eat; and once he thought that he heard a faint toot from a locomotive across the river, and then he smiled. The bridge's failure would hurt his assistant not a little, but Hitchcock was a young man with his big work yet to do. For himself the crash meant everything — everything that made a hard life worth the living. They would say, the men of his own profession — he remembered the half-pitying things that he himself had said when Lockhart's big water-works burst and broke down in brick heaps and sludge, and Lockhart's spirit broke in him and he died. He remembered what he himself had said when the Sumao Bridge went out in the big cyclone by the sea; and most he remembered poor Hartopp's

face three weeks later, when the shame had marked it. His bridge was twice the size of Hartopp's, and it carried the Findlayson truss as well as the new pier-shoe — the Findlayson bolted shoe. There were no excuses in his service. Government might listen, perhaps, but his own kind would judge him by his bridge, as that stood or fell. He went over it in his head, plate by plate, span by span, brick by brick, pier by pier, remembering, comparing, estimating, and recalculating, lest there should be any mistake; and through the long hours and through the flights of formulæ that danced and wheeled before him, a cold fear would come to pinch his heart. His side of the sum was beyond question; but what man knew Mother Gunga's arithmetic? Even as he was making all sure by the multiplication-table, the river might be scooping pot-holes to the very bottom of any one of those eighty-foot piers that carried his reputation. Again a servant came to him with food, but his mouth was dry, and he could only drink and return to the decimals in his brain. And the river was still rising. Peroo, in a mat shelter-coat, crouched at his feet, watching now his face and now the face of the river, but saying nothing.

At last the lascar rose and floundered through the mud toward the village, but he was careful to leave an ally to watch the boats.

Presently he returned, most irreverently driving

before him the priest of his creed — a fat old man with a gray beard that whipped the wind with the wet cloth that blew over his shoulder. Never was seen so lamentable a *guru.*

"What good are offerings and little kerosene lamps and dry grain," shouted Peroo, "if squatting in the mud is all that thou canst do? Thou hast dealt long with the Gods when they were contented and well-wishing. Now they are angry. Speak to them!

"What is a man against the wrath of Gods?" whined the priest, cowering as the wind took him. "Let me go to the temple, and I will pray there."

"Son of a pig, pray *here!* Is there no return for salt fish and curry powder and dried onions? Call aloud! Tell Mother Gunga we have had enough. Bid her be still for the night. I cannot pray, but I have served in the Kumpani's boats, and when men did not obey my orders I ——" A flourish of the wire-rope colt rounded the sentence, and the priest, breaking from his disciple, fled to the village.

"Fat pig!" said Peroo. "After all that we have done for him! When the flood is down I will see to it that we get a new *guru.* Finlinson Sahib, it darkens for night now, and since yesterday nothing has been eaten. Be wise, Sahib. No man can endure watching and great thinking on an empty belly. Lie down, Sahib. The river will do what the river will do."

"The bridge is mine; I cannot leave it."

"Wilt thou hold it up with thy hands, then?" said Peroo, laughing. "I was troubled for my boats and sheers *before* the flood came. Now we are in the hands of the Gods. The Sahib will not eat and lie down? Take these, then. They are meat and good toddy together, and they kill all weariness, besides the fever that follows the rain. I have eaten nothing else to-day at all."

He took a small tin tobacco-box from his sodden waist-belt and thrust it into Findlayson's hand, saying, "Nay, do not be afraid. It is no more than opium — clean Malwa opium!"

Findlayson shook two or three of the dark-brown pellets into his hand, and hardly knowing what he did, swallowed them. The stuff was at least a good guard against fever — the fever that was creeping upon him out of the wet mud — and he had seen what Peroo could do in the stewing mists of autumn on the strength of a dose from the tin box.

Peroo nodded with bright eyes. "In a little — in a little the Sahib will find that he thinks well again. I too will ——" He dived into his treasure-box, resettled the rain-coat over his head, and squatted down to watch the boats. It was too dark now to see beyond the first pier, and the night seemed to have given the river new strength. Findlayson stood with his chin on his chest, thinking. There was one point about one of the piers — the Seventh

— that he had not fully settled in his mind. The figures would not shape themselves to the eye except one by one and at enormous intervals of time. There was a sound, rich and mellow in his ears, like the deepest note of a double-bass — an entrancing sound upon which he pondered for several hours, as it seemed. Then Peroo was at his elbow, shouting that a wire hawser had snapped and the stone-boats were loose. Findlayson saw the fleet open and swing out fanwise to a long-drawn shriek of wire straining across gunnels.

"A tree hit them. They will all go," cried Peroo. "The main hawser has parted. What does the Sahib do?"

An immensely complex plan had suddenly flashed into Findlayson's mind. He saw the ropes running from boat to boat in straight lines and angles — each rope a line of white fire. But there was one rope which was the master-rope. He could see that rope. If he could pull it once, it was absolutely and mathematically certain that the disordered fleet would reassemble itself in the backwater behind the guard-tower. But why, he wondered, was Peroo clinging so desperately to his waist as he hastened down the bank? It was necessary to put the lascar aside, gently and slowly, because it was necessary to save the boats, and, further, to demonstrate the extreme ease of the problem that looked so difficult. And then — but it was of no conceivable

importance — a wire rope raced through his hand burning it, the high bank disappeared, and with it all the slowly dispersing factors of the problem. He was sitting in the rainy darkness — sitting in a boat that spun like a top, and Peroo was standing over him.

"I had forgotten," said the lascar slowly, "that to those fasting and unused the opium is worse than any wine. Those who die in Gunga go to the Gods. Still, I have no desire to present myself before such great ones. Can the Sahib swim?"

"What need? He can fly — fly as swiftly as the wind," was the thick answer.

"He is mad!" muttered Peroo under his breath. "And he threw me aside like a bundle of dung-cakes. Well, he will not know his death. The boat cannot live an hour here even if she strike nothing. It is not good to look at death with a clear eye."

He refreshed himself again from the tin box, squatted down in the bows of the reeling, pegged, and stitched craft staring through the mist at the nothing that was there. A warm drowsiness crept over Findlayson, the Chief Engineer, whose duty was with his bridge. The heavy raindrops struck him with a thousand tingling little thrills, and the weight of all time since time was made hung heavy on his eyelids. He thought and perceived that he was perfectly secure. for the water was so solid

that a man could surely step out upon it, and standing still with his legs apart to keep his balance — this was the most important point — would be borne with great and easy speed to the shore. But yet a better plan came to him. It needed only an exertion of will for the soul to hurl the body ashore as wind drives paper; to waft it kite-fashion to the bank. Thereafter — the boat spun dizzily — suppose the high wind got under the freed body? Would it tower up like a kite and pitch headlong on the far-away sands, or would it duck about beyond control through all eternity? Findlayson gripped the gunnel to anchor himself, for it seemed that he was on the edge of taking the flight before he had settled all his plans. Opium has more effect on the white man than the black. Peroo was only comfortably indifferent to accidents. "She cannot live," he grunted. "Her seams open already. If she were even a dinghy with oars we could have ridden it out; but a box with holes is no good. Finlinson Sahib, she fills."

"*Accha!* I am going away. Come thou also."

In his mind Findlayson had already escaped from the boat, and was circling high in air to find a rest for the sole of his foot. His body — he was really sorry for its gross helplessness — lay in the stern, the water rushing about its knees.

"How very ridiculous!" he said to himself, from his eyrie; "that — is Findlayson — chief of the

Kashi Bridge. The poor beast is going to be drowned, too. Drowned when it 's close to shore. I 'm — I 'm on shore already. Why does n't it come along?"

To his intense disgust, he found his soul back in his body again, and that body spluttering and choking in deep water. The pain of the reunion was atrocious, but it was necessary, also, to fight for the body. He was conscious of grasping wildly at wet sand, and striding prodigiously, as one strides in a dream, to keep foothold in the swirling water, till at last he hauled himself clear of the hold of the river, and dropped, panting, on wet earth.

"Not this night," said Peroo in his ear. "The Gods have protected us." The lascar moved his feet cautiously, and they rustled among dried stumps. "This is some island of last year's indigo crop," he went on. "We shall find no men here; but have great care, Sahib; all the snakes of a hundred miles have been flooded out. Here comes the lightning, on the heels of the wind. Now we shall be able to look; but walk carefully."

Findlayson was far and far beyond any fear of snakes, or indeed any merely human emotion. He saw, after he had rubbed the water from his eyes, with an immense clearness, and trod, so it seemed to himself, with world-encompassing strides. Somewhere in the night of time he had built a bridge — a bridge that spanned illimitable levels of shining

seas; but the Deluge had swept it away, leaving this one island under heaven for Findlayson and his companion, sole survivors of the breed of man.

An incessant lightning, forked and blue, showed all that there was to be seen on the little patch in the flood — a clump of thorn, a clump of swaying, creaking bamboos, and a gray, gnarled peepul overshadowing a Hindoo shrine, from whose dome floated a tattered red flag. The holy man whose summer resting-place it was had long since abandoned it, and the weather had broken the red-daubed image of his God. The two men stumbled, heavy-limbed and heavy-eyed, over the ashes of a brick-set cooking-place, and dropped down under the shelter of the branches, while the rain and river roared together.

The stumps of the indigo crackled, and there was a smell of cattle, as a huge and dripping Brahminee Bull shouldered his way under the tree. The flashes revealed the trident mark of Shiva on his flank, the insolence of head and hump, the luminous stag-like eyes, the brow crowned with a wreath of sodden marigold blooms and the silky dewlap that night swept the ground. There was a noise behind him of other beasts coming up from the flood-line through the thicket, a sound of heavy feet and deep breathing.

"Here be more beside ourselves," said Findlayson, his head against the tree-pole, looking through half-shut eyes, wholly at ease.

"Truly," said Peroo thickly, "and no small ones."

"What are they, then? I do not see clearly."

"The Gods. Who else? Look!"

"Ah, true! The Gods surely — the Gods." Findlayson smiled as his head fell forward on his chest. Peroo was eminently right. After the Flood, who should be alive in the land except the Gods that made it — the Gods to whom his village prayed nightly — the Gods who were in all men's mouths and about all men's ways? He could not raise his head or stir a finger for the trance that held him, and Peroo was smiling vacantly at the lightning.

The Bull paused by the shrine, his head lowered to the damp earth. A green Parrot in the branches preened his wet wings and screamed against the thunder as the circle under the tree filled with the shifting shadows of beasts. There was a Black-buck at the Bull's heels — such a buck as Findlayson in his far-away life upon earth might have seen in dreams — a buck with a royal head, ebon back, silver belly, and gleaming straight horns. Beside him, her head bowed to the ground, the green eyes burning under the heavy brows, with restless tail switching the dead grass, paced a Tigress, full-bellied and deep-jowled.

The Bull crouched beside the shrine and there leaped from the darkness a monstrous gray Ape, who seated himself man-wise in the place of the fallen

image, and the rain spilled like jewels from the hair of his neck and shoulders.

Other shadows came and went behind the circle, among them a drunken Man flourishing staff and drinking-bottle. Then a hoarse bellow broke out from near the ground. "The flood lessens even now," it cried. "Hour by hour the water falls, and their bridge still stands!"

"My bridge," said Findlayson to himself. "That must be very old work now. What have the Gods to do with my bridge?"

His eyes rolled in the darkenss following the roar. A Crocodile — the blunt-nosed, ford-haunting Mugger of the Ganges — draggled herself before the beasts, lashing furiously to right and left with her tail.

"They have made it too strong for me. In all this night I have only torn away a handful of planks. The walls stand! The towers stand! They have chained my flood, and my river is not free any more. Heavenly Ones, take this yoke away! Give me clear water between bank and bank! It is I, Mother Gunga, that speak. The Justice of the Gods! Deal me the Justice of the Gods!"

"What said I?" whispered Peroo. "This is in truth a Punchayet of the Gods. Now we know that all the world is dead, save you and I, Sahib."

The Parrot screamed and fluttered again, and the Tigress, her ears flat to her head, snarled wickedly.

Somewhere in the shadow a great trunk and

gleaming tusks swayed to and fro, and a low gurgle broke the silence that followed on the snarl.

"We be here," said a deep voice, "the Great Ones. One only and very many. Shiv, my father, is here, with Indra. Kali has spoken already. Hanuman listens also."

"Kashi is without her Kowtal to-night," shouted the Man with the drinking-bottle, flinging his staff to the ground, while the island rang to the baying of hounds. "Give her the Justice of the Gods."

"Ye were still when they polluted my waters," the great Crocodile bellowed. "Ye made no sign when my river was trapped between the walls. I had no help save my own strength, and that failed — the strength of Mother Gunga failed — before their guard-towers. What could I do? I have done everything. Finish now, Heavenly Ones!"

"I brought the death; I rode the spotted sickness from hut to hut of their workmen, and yet they would not cease." A nose-slitten, hide-worn Ass, lame, scissor-legged, and galled, limped forward. "I cast the death at them out of my nostrils, but they would not cease."

Peroo would have moved, but the opium lay heavy upon him.

"Bah!" he said, spitting. "Here is Sitala herself; Mata — the small-pox. Has the Sahib a handkerchief to put over his face?"

"Small help! They fed me the corpses for a

month, and I flung them out on my sand-bars, but their work went forward! Demons they are, and so sons of demons! And ye left Mother Gunga alone for their fire-carriage to make a mock of. The Justice of the Gods on the bridge-builders!"

The Bull turned the cud in his mouth and answered slowly, "If the Justice of the Gods caught all who made a mock of holy things, there would be many dark altars in the land, mother."

"But this goes beyond a mock," said the Tigress, darting forward a griping paw. "Thou knowest, Shiv, and ye, too, Heavenly Ones; ye know that they have defiled Gunga. Surely they must come to the Destroyer. Let Indra judge."

The Buck made no movement as he answered, "How long has this evil been?"

"Three years, as men count years," said the Mugger, close pressed to the earth.

"Does Mother Gunga die, then, in a year, that she is so anxious to see vengeance now? The deep sea was where she runs but yesterday, and to-morrow the sea shall cover her again as the Gods count that which men call time. Can any say that this their bridge endures till to-morrow?" said the Buck.

There was a long hush, and in the clearing of the storm the full moon stood up above the dripping trees.

"Judge ye, then," said the River sullenly. "I have spoken my shame. The flood falls still. I can do no more."

"For my own part" — it was the voice of the great Ape seated within the shrine — "it pleases me well to watch these men, remembering that I also builded no small bridge in the world's youth."

"They say, too," snarled the Tiger, "that these men came of the wreck of thy armies, Hanuman, and therefore thou hast aided ——"

"They toil as my armies toiled in Lanka, and they believe that their toil endures. Indra is too high, but Shiv, thou knowest how the land is threaded with their fire-carriages."

"Yea, I know," said the Bull. "Their Gods instructed them in the matter."

A laugh ran round the circle.

"Their Gods! What should their Gods know? They were born yesterday, and those that made them are scarcely yet cold," said the Mugger. "To-morrow their Gods will die."

"Ho!" said Peroo. "Mother Gunga talks good talk. I told that to the padre-sahib who preached on the *Mombassa*, and he asked the Burra Malum to put me in irons for a great rudeness."

"Surely they make these things to please their Gods," said the Bull again.

"Not altogether," the Elephant rolled forth. "It is for the profit of my mahajuns — my fat money-lenders that worship me at each new year, when they draw my image at the head of the account-books. I, looking over their shoulders by lamplight, see that the

names in the books are those of men in far places — for all the towns are drawn together by the fire-carriage, and the money comes and goes swiftly, and the account-books grow as fat as — myself. And I, who am Ganesh of Good Luck, I bless my peoples."

"They have changed the face of the land — which is my land. They have killed and made new towns on my banks," said the Mugger.

"It is but the shifting of a little dirt. Let the dirt dig in the dirt if it pleases the dirt," answered the Elephant.

"But afterward?" said the Tiger. "Afterward they will see that Mother Gunga can avenge no insult, and they fall away from her first, and later from us all, one by one. In the end, Ganesh, we are left with naked altars."

The drunken Man staggered to his feet, and hiccupped vehemently in the face of the assembled Gods.

"Kali lies. My sister lies. Also this my stick is the Kotwal of Kashi, and he keeps tally of my pilgrims. When the time comes to worship Bhairon — and it is always time — the fire-carriages move one by one, and each bears a thousand pilgrims. They do not come afoot any more, but rolling upon wheels, and my honour is increased."

"Gunna, I have seen thy bed at Pryag black with the pilgrims," said the Ape, leaning forward "and

but for the fire-carriage they would have come slowly and in fewer numbers. Remember."

"They come to me always," Bhairon went on thickly. "By day and night they pray to me, all the Common People in the fields and the roads. Who is like Bhairon to-day? What talk is this of changing faiths? Is my staff Kotwal of Kashi for nothing? He keeps the tally, and he says that never were so many altars as to-day, and the fire-carriage serves them well. Bhairon am I — Bhairon of the Common People, and the chiefest of the Heavenly Ones to-day. Also my staff says ——"

"Peace, thou!" lowed the Bull. "The worship of the schools is mine, and they talk very wisely, asking whether I be one or many, as is the delight of my people, and ye know what I am. Kali, my wife, thou knowest also."

"Yea, I know," said the Tigress, with lowered head.

"Greater am I than Gunga also. For ye know who moved the minds of men that they should count Gunga holy among the rivers. Who die in that water — ye know how men say — come to us without punishment, and Gunga knows that the fire-carriage has borne to her scores upon scores of such anxious ones; and Kali knows that she has held her chiefest festivals among the pilgrimages that are fed by the fire-carriage. Who smote at Pooree, under the Image there, her thousands in a day and a night,

and bound the sickness to the wheels of the fire-carriages, so that it ran from one end of the land to the other? Who but Kali? Before the fire-carriage came it was a heavy toil. The fire-carriages have served thee well, Mother of Death. But I speak for mine own altars, who am not Bhairon of the Common Folk, but Shiv. Men go to and fro, making words and telling talk of strange Gods, and I listen. Faith follows faith among my people in the schools, and I have no anger; for when the words are said, and the new talk is ended, to Shiv men return at the last."

"True. It is true," murmured Hanuman. "To Shiv and to the others, mother, they return. I creep from temple to temple in the North, where they worship one God and His Prophet; and presently my image is alone within their shrines."

"Small thanks," said the Buck, turning his head slowly. "I am that One and His Prophet also."

"Even so, father," said Hanuman. "And to the South I go who am the oldest of the Gods as men know the Gods, and presently I touch the shrines of the new faith and the Woman whom we know is hewn twelve-armed, and still they call her Mary."

"Small thanks, brother," said the Tigress. "I am that Woman."

"Even so, sister; and I go West among the fire-carriages, and stand before the bridge-builders in

many shapes, and because of me they change their faiths and are very wise. Ho! ho! I am the builder of bridges, indeed — bridges between this and that, and each bridge leads surely to Us in the end. Be content, Gunga. Neither these men nor those that follow them mock thee at all."

"Am I alone, then, Heavenly Ones? Shall I smooth out my flood lest unhappily I bear away their walls? Will Indra dry my springs in the hills and make me crawl humbly between their wharfs? Shall I bury me in the sand ere I offend?"

"And all for the sake of a little iron bar with the fire-carriage atop. Truly, Mother Gunga is always young!" said Ganesh the Elephant. "A child had not spoken more foolishly. Let the dirt dig in the dirt ere it return to the dirt. I know only that my people grow rich and praise me. Shiv has said that the men of the schools do not forget; Bhairon is content for his crowd of the Common People; and Hanuman laughs."

"Surely I laugh," said the Ape. "My altars are few beside those of Ganesh or Bhairon, but the fire-carriages bring me new worshippers from beyond the Black Water — the men who believe that their God is toil. I run before them beckoning, and they follow Hanuman."

"Give them the toil that they desire, then," said the River. "Make a bar across my flood and throw the water back upon the bridge. Once thou

wast strong in Lanka, Hanuman. Stoop and lift my bed."

"Who gives life can take life." The Ape scratched in the mud with a long forefinger. "And yet, who would profit by the killing? Very many would die."

There came up from the water a snatch of a love-song such as the boys sing when they watch their cattle in the noon heats of late spring. The Parrot screamed joyously, sidling along his branch with lowered head as the song grew louder, and in a patch of clear moonlight stood revealed the young herd, the darling of the Gopis, the idol of dreaming maids and of mothers ere their children are born — Krishna the Well-beloved. He stooped to knot up his long, wet hair, and the parrot fluttered to his shoulder.

"Fleeting and singing, and singing and fleeting," hiccupped Bhairon. "Those make thee late for the council, brother."

"And then?" said Krishna, with a laugh, throwing back his head. "Ye can do little without me or Karma here. He fondled the Parrot's plumage and laughed again. "What is this sitting and talking together? I heard Mother Gunga roaring in the dark, and so came quickly from a hut where I lay warm. And what have ye done to Karma, that he is so wet and silent? And what does Mother Gunga here? Are the heavens full that ye must

come paddling in the mud beast-wise? Karma, what do they do?"

"Gunga has prayed for a vengeance on the bridge-builders, and Kali is with her. Now she bids Hanuman whelm the bridge, that her honour may be made great," cried the Parrot. "I waited here, knowing that thou wouldst come O my master!"

"And the Heavenly Ones said nothing? Did Gunga and the Mother of Sorrows out-talk them? Did none speak for my people?"

"Nay," said Ganesh, moving uneasily from foot to foot; "I said it was but dirt at play, and why should we stamp it flat?"

"I was content to let them toil — well content," said Hanuman.

"What had I to do with Gunga's anger?" said the Bull.

"I am Bhairon of the Common Folk, and this my staff is Kotwal of all Kashi. I spoke for the Common People."

"Thou?" The young God's eyes sparkled.

"Am I not the first of the Gods in their mouths to-day?" returned Bhairon, unabashed. "For the sake of the Common People I said — very many wise things which I have now forgotten — but this my staff ——"

Krishna turned impatiently, saw the Mugger at his feet, and kneeling, slipped an arm round the cold neck. "Mother," he said gently, "get thee

to thy flood again. The matter is not for thee. What harm shall thy honour take of this live dirt? Thou hast given them their fields new year after year, and by thy flood they are made strong. They come all to thee at the last. What need to slay them now? Have pity, mother, for a little — and it is only for a little."

"If it be only for a little ——" the slow beast began.

"Are they Gods, then?" Krishna returned with a laugh, his eyes looking into the dull eyes of the River. "Be certain that it is only for a little. The Heavenly Ones have heard thee, and presently justice will be done. Go, now, mother, to the flood again. Men and cattle are thick on the waters — the banks fall — the villages melt because of thee."

"But the bridge — the bridge stands." The Mugger turned grunting into the undergrowth as Krishna rose.

"It is ended," said the Tigress, viciously. "There is no more justice from the Heavenly Ones. Ye have made shame and sport of Gunga, who asked no more than a few score lives."

"Of *my* people — who lie under the leaf-roofs of the village yonder — of the young girls, and the young men who sing to them," said Krishna. "And when all is done, what profit? To-morrow sees them at work. Ay, if ye swept the bridge out from end to

end they would begin anew. Hear me! Bhairon is drunk always. Hanuman mocks his people with new riddles."

"Nay, but they are very old ones," the Ape said, laughing.

"Shiv hears the talk of the schools and the dreams of the holy men; Ganesh thinks only of his fat traders; but I — I live with these my people, asking for no gifts, and so receiving them hourly."

"And very tender art thou of thy people," said the Tigress.

"They are my own. The old women dream of me, turning in their sleep; the maids look and listen for me when they go to fill their lotahs by the river. I walk by the young men waiting without the gates at dusk, and I call over my shoulder to the white-beards. Ye know, Heavenly Ones, that I alone of us all walk upon the earth continually, and have no pleasure in our heavens so long as a green blade springs here, or there are two voices at twilight in the standing crops. Wise are ye, but ye live far off, forgetting whence ye came. So do I not forget. And the fire-carriage feeds your shrines, ye say? And the fire-carriages bring a thousand pilgrimages where but ten came in the old years? True. That is true to-day."

"But to-morrow they are dead, brother," said Ganesh.

"Peace!" said the Bull, as Hanuman leaned for-

ward again. "And to-morrow, beloved — what of to-morrow?"

"This only. A new word creeping from mouth to mouth among the Common Folk — a word that neither man nor God can lay hold of — an evil word — a little lazy word among the Common Folk, saying (and none know who set that word afoot) that they weary of ye, Heavenly Ones."

The Gods laughed together softly. "And then, beloved?" they said.

"And to cover that weariness they, my people, will bring to thee, Shiv, and to thee, Ganesh, at first greater offerings and a louder noise of worship. But the word has gone abroad, and, after, they will pay fewer dues to your fat Brahmins. Next they will forget your altars, but so slowly that no man can say how his forgetfulness began."

"I knew — I knew! I spoke this also, but they would not hear," said the Tigress. "We should have slain — we should have slain!"

"It is too late now. Ye should have slain at the beginning, when the men from across the water had taught our folk nothing. Now my people see their work, and go away thinking. They do not think of the Heavenly Ones altogether. They think of the fire-carriage and the other things that the bridge-builders have done, and when your priests thrust forward hands asking alms, they give unwillingly a little. That is the beginning, among one or two, or

five or ten — for I, moving among my people, know what is in their hearts."

"And the end, Jester of the Gods? What shall the end be?" said Ganesh.

"The end shall be as it was in the beginning, O slothful son of Shiv! The flame shall die upon the altars and the prayer upon the tongue till ye become little Gods again — Gods of the jungle — names that the hunters of rats and noosers of dogs whisper in the thicket and among the caves — rag-Gods, pot Godlings of the tree, and the village-mark, as ye were at the beginning. That is the end, Ganesh, for thee, and for Bhairon — Bhairon of the Common People."

"It is very far away," grunted Bhairon. "Also, it is a lie."

"Many women have kissed Krishna. They told him this to cheer their own hearts when the gray hairs came, and he has told us the tale," said the Bull, below his breath.

"Their Gods came, and we changed them. I took the woman and made her twelve-armed. So shall we twist all their Gods," said Hanuman.

"Their Gods! This is no question of their Gods — one or three — man or woman. The matter is with the people. *They* move, and not the Gods of the bridge-builders," said Krishna.

"So be it. I have made a man worship the fire-carriage as it stood still breathing smoke, and he

knew not that he worshipped me," said Hanuman the Ape. "They will only change a little the names of their Gods. I shall lead the builders of the bridges as of old; Shiv shall be worshipped in the schools by such as doubt and despise their fellows; Ganesh shall have his mahajuns, and Bhairon the donkey-drivers, the pilgrims, and the sellers of toys. Beloved, they will do no more than change the names, and that we have seen a thousand times."

"Surely they will do no more than change the names," echoed Ganesh: but there was an uneasy movement among the Gods.

"They will change more than the names. Me alone they cannot kill, so long as maiden and man meet together or the spring follows the winter rains. Heavenly Ones, not for nothing have I walked upon the earth. My people know not now what they know; but I, who live with them, I read their hearts. Great Kings, the beginning of the end is born already. The fire-carriages shout the names of new Gods that are *not* the old under new names. Drink now and eat greatly! Bathe your faces in the smoke of the altars before they grow cold! Take dues and listen to the cymbals and the drums, Heavenly Ones, while yet there are flowers and songs. As men count time the end is far off; but as we who know reckon it is to-day. I have spoken."

The young God ceased, and his brethren looked at each other long in silence.

"This I have not heard before," Peroo whispered in his companion's ear. "And yet sometimes, when I oiled the brasses in the engine-room of the *Goorkha*, I have wondered if our priests were so wise — so wise. The day is coming, Sahib. They will be gone by the morning."

A yellow light broadened in the sky, and the tone of the river changed as the darkness withdrew.

Suddenly the Elephant trumpeted aloud as though men had goaded him.

"Let Indra judge. Father of all, speak thou! What of the things we have heard? Has Krishna lied indeed? Or ——"

"Ye know," said the Buck, rising to his feet. "Ye know the Riddle of the Gods. When Brahm ceases to dream the Heavens and the Hells and Earth disappear. Be content. Brahm dreams still. The dreams come and go, and the nature of the dreams changes, but still Brahm dreams. Krishna has walked too long upon earth, and yet I love him the more for the tale he has told. The Gods change, beloved — all save One!"

"Ay, all save one that makes love in the hearts of men," said Krishna, knotting his girdle. "It is but a little time to wait, and ye shall know if I lie."

Truly it is but a little time, as thou sayest, and we shall know. Get thee to thy huts again, beloved,

and make sport for the young things, for still Brahm dreams. Go, my children! Brahm dreams — and till He wakes the Gods die not."

. . . . . .

"Whither went they?" said the Lascar, awe-struck, shivering a little with the cold.

"God knows!" said Findlayson. The river and the island lay in full daylight now, and there was never mark of hoof or pug on the wet earth under the peepul. Only a parrot screamed in the branches, bringing down showers of water-drops as he fluttered his wings.

"Up! We are cramped with cold! Has the opium died out? Canst thou move, Sahib?"

Findlayson staggered to his feet and shook himself. His head swam and ached, but the work of the opium was over, and, as he sluiced his forehead in a pool, the Chief Engineer of the Kashi Bridge was wondering how he had managed to fall upon the island, what chances the day offered of return, and, above all, how his work stood.

"Peroo, I have forgotten much. I was under the guard-tower watching the river; and then —— Did the flood sweep us away?"

"No. The boats broke loose, Sahib, and" (if the Sahib had forgotten about the opium, decidedly Peroo would not remind him) "in striving to retie them, so it seemed to me — but it was dark — a

rope caught the Sahib and threw him upon a boat. Considering that we two, with Hitchcock Sahib, built, as it were, that bridge, I came also upon the boat, which came riding on horseback, as it were, on the nose of this island, and so, splitting, cast us ashore. I made a great cry when the boat left the wharf, and without doubt Hitchcock Sahib will come for us. As for the bridge, so many have died in the building that it cannot fall."

A fierce sun, that drew out all the smell of the sodden land, had followed the storm, and in that clear light there was no room for a man to think of dreams of the dark. Findlayson stared up-stream, across the blaze of moving water, till his eyes ached. There was no sign of any bank to the Ganges, much less of a bridge-line.

"We came down far," he said. "It was wonderful that we were not drowned a hundred times."

"That was the least of the wonder, for no man dies before his time. I have seen Sydney, I have seen London, and twenty great ports, but"— Peroo looked at the damp, discoloured shrine under the peepul — "never man has seen that we saw here."

"What?"

"Has the Sahib forgotten; or do we black men only see the Gods?"

"There was a fever upon me." Findlayson was still looking uneasily across the water. "It seemed that the island was full of beasts and men talking,

but I do not remember. A boat could live in this water now, I think."

"Oho! Then it *is* true. 'When Brahm ceases to dream, the Gods die.' Now I know, indeed, what he meant. Once, too, the *guru* said as much to me; but then I did not understand. Now I am wise."

"What?" said Findlayson over his shoulder.

Peroo went on as if he were talking to himself. "Six — seven — ten monsoons since, I was watch on the fo'c'sle of the *Rewah* — the Kumpani's big boat — and there was a big *tufan*, green and black water beating; and I held fast to the life-lines, choking under the waters. Then I thought of the Gods — of Those whom we saw to-night" — he stared curiously at Findlayson's back, but the white man was looking across the flood. "Yes, I say of Those whom we saw this night past, and I called upon Them to protect me. And while I prayed, still keeping my lookout, a big wave came and threw me forward upon the ring of the great black bow-anchor, and the *Rewah* rose high and high, leaning toward the left-hand side, and the water drew away from beneath her nose, and I lay upon my belly, holding the ring, and looking down into those great deeps. Then I thought, even in the face of death, if I lose hold I die, and for me neither the *Rewah* nor my place by the galley where the rice is cooked, nor Bombay, nor Calcutta, nor even London, will be any

more for me. 'How shall I be sure,' I said, 'that the Gods to whom I pray will abide at all?' This I thought, and the *Rewah* dropped her nose as a hammer falls, and all the sea came in and slid me backward along the fo'c'sle and over the break of the fo'c'sle, and I very badly bruised my shin against the donkey-engine: but I did not die, and I have seen the Gods. They are good for live men, but for the dead —— They have spoken Themselves. Therefore, when I come to the village I will beat the *guru* for talking riddles which are no riddles. When Brahm ceases to dream, the Gods go."

"Look up-stream. The light blinds. Is there smoke yonder?"

Peroo shaded his eyes with his hands. "He is a wise man and quick. Hitchcock Sahib would not trust a rowboat. He has borrowed the Rao Sahib's steam-launch, and comes to look for us. I have always said that there should have been a steam-launch on the bridge-works for us."

The territory of the Rao of Baraon lay within ten miles of the bridge; and Findlayson and Hitchcock had spent a fair portion of their scanty leisure in playing billiards and shooting Black-buck with the young man. He had been bear-led by an English tutor of sporting tastes for some five or six years, and was now royally wasting the revenues accumulated during his minority by the Indian Government. His steam-launch, with its silver-plated rails, striped silk awn-

ing, and mahogany decks, was a new toy which Findlayson had found horribly in the way when the Rao came to look at the bridge-works.

"It 's great luck," murmured Findlayson, but he was none the less afraid, wondering what news might be of the bridge.

The gaudy blue and white funnel came downstream swiftly. They could see Hitchcock in the bows, with a pair of opera-glasses, and his face was unusually white. Then Peroo hailed, and the launch made for the tail of the island. The Rao Sahib, in tweed shooting-suit and a seven-hued turban, waved his royal hand, and Hitchcock shouted. But he need have asked no questions, for Findlayson's first demand was for his bridge.

"All serene! 'Gad, I never expected to see you again, Findlayson. You 're seven koss downstream. Yes, there 's not a stone shifted anywhere; but how are you? I borrowed the Rao Sahib's launch, and he was good enough to come along. Jump in."

"Ah, Finlinson, you are very well, eh? That was most unprecedented calamity last night, eh? My royal palace, too, it leaks like the devil, and the crops will also be short all about my country. Now you shall back her out, Hitchcock. I — I do not understand steam-engines. You are wet? You are cold Finlinson? I have some things to eat here, and you will take a good drink."

"I 'm immensely grateful, Rao Sahib. I believe you 've saved my life. How did Hitchcock ——"

"Oho! His hair was upon end. He rode to me in the middle of the night and woke me up in the arms of Morphus. I was most truly concerned, Finlinson, so I came too. My head-priest he is very angry just now. We will go quick, Mister Hitchcock. I am due to attend at twelve-forty-five in the state temple, where we sanctify some new idol. If not so I would have asked you to spend the day with me. They are dam-bore, these religious ceremonies, Finlinson, eh?"

Peroo, well known to the crew, had possessed himself of the wheel, and was taking the launch craftily up-stream. But while he steered he was, in his mind, handling two feet of partially untwisted wire-rope; and the back upon which he beat was the back of his *guru*.

IV

THE MIRACLES

I SENT a message to my dear —
A thousand leagues and more to her —
The dumb sea-levels thrilled to hear,
And lost Atlantis bore to her.

Behind my message hard I came,
And nigh had found a grave for me;
But that I launched of steel and flame
Did war against the wave for me.

Uprose the deep, by gale on gale,
To bid me change my mind again —
He broke his teeth along my rail,
And, roaring, swung behind again.

I stayed the sun at noon to tell
My way across the waste of it;
I read the storm before it fell
And made the better haste of it.

Afar, I hailed the land at night —
The towers I built had heard of me —
And, ere my rocket reached its height,
Had flashed my Love the word of me.

Earth gave her chosen men of strength
  (They lived and strove and died for me)
To drive my road a nation's length,
  And toss the miles aside for me.

I snatched their toil to serve my needs —
  Too slow their fleetest flew for me —
I tired twenty smoking steeds,
  And bade them bait a new for me.

I sent the lightnings forth to see
  Where hour by hour she waited me.
Among ten million one was she,
  And surely all men hated me!

Dawn ran to meet us at my goal —
  Ah, day no tongue shall tell again!
And little folk of little soul
  Rose up to buy and sell again!

V

OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS

1897

(*Canadian Preferential Tariff*, 1897)

A NATION spoke to a Nation,
A Queen sent word to a Throne:
"Daughter am I in my mother's house,
But mistress in my own.
The gates are mine to open,
As the gates are mine to close,
And I set my house in order,"
Said our Lady of the Snows.

"Neither with laughter nor weeping,
Fear or the child's amaze —
Soberly under the White Man's law
My white men go their ways.
Not for the Gentiles' clamour —
Insult or threat of blows —
Bow we the knee to Baal,"
Said our Lady of the Snows.

"My speech is clean and single,
I talk of common things —

Words of the wharf and the market-place
  And the ware the merchant brings:
Favour to those I favour,
  But a stumbling-block to my foes.
Many there be that hate us,"
  Said our Lady of the Snows.

"I called my chiefs to council
  In the din of a troubled year;
For the sake of a sign ye would not see,
  And a word ye would not hear.
This is our message and answer;
  This is the path we chose:
For we be also a people,"
  Said our Lady of the Snows.

"Carry the word to my sisters —
  To the Queens of the East and the South
I have proven faith in the Heritage
  By more than the word of the mouth.
They that are wise may follow
  Ere the world's war-trumpet blows,
But I — I am first in the battle,"
  Said our Lady of the Snows.

A Nation spoke to a Nation,
  A Throne sent word to a Throne:
"Daughter am I in my mother's house,
  But mistress in my own.

The gates are mine to open,
As the gates are mine to close,
And I abide by my Mother's House,"
Said our Lady of the Snows.

VI

THE SONG OF THE WOMEN

(Lady Dufferin's Fund for medical Aid to the Women of India).

HOW shall she know the worship we would do her?
The walls are high, and she is very far.
How shall the women's message reach unto her
Above the tumult of the packed bazaar?
Free wind of March, against the lattice blowing,
Bear thou our thanks, lest she depart unknowing.

Go forth across the fields we may not roam in,
Go forth beyond the trees that rim the city,
To whatsoe'er fair place she hath her home in,
Who dowered us with wealth of love and pity.
Out of our shadow pass, and seek her singing —
"I have no gifts but Love alone for bringing."

Say that we be a feeble folk who greet her,
But old in grief, and very wise in tears;
Say that we, being desolate, entreat her
That she forget us not in after years;
For we have seen the light, and it were grievous
To dim that dawning if our lady leave us.

By life that ebbed with none to stanch the failing,
  By love's sad harvest garnered in the spring,
When Love in ignorance wept unavailing
  O'er young buds dead before their blossoming;
    By all the gray owl watched, the pale moon viewed,
    In past grim years, declare our gratitude!

By hands uplifted to the Gods that heard not,
  By gifts that found no favour in their sight,
By faces bent above the babe that stirred not,
  By nameless horrors of the stifling night;
    By ills foredone, by peace her toils discover,
    Bid Earth be good beneath and Heaven above her!

If she have sent her servants in our pain,
  If she have fought with Death and dulled his sword;
If she have given back our sick again,
  And to the breast the weakling lips restored,
    Is it a little thing that she has wrought?
    Then Life and Death and Motherhood be naught.

Go forth, oh, wind, our message on thy wings,
  And they shall hear thee pass and bid thee speed,
In red-roofed hut, or white-walled home of kings,
  Who have been helped by her in their need.

All spring shall give thee fragrance, and the wheat
Shall be a tasselled floor-cloth to thy feet.

Haste, for our hearts are with thee, take no rest,
Loud-voiced embassador, from sea to sea
Proclaim the blessing, manifold, confest,
Of those in darkness by her hand set free;
Then very softly to her presence move,
And whisper: "Lady, lo, they know and love!"

VII

THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN

1899

TAKE up the White Man's burden —
Send forth the best ye breed —
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness,
On fluttered folk and wild —
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half-devil and half child.

Take up the White Man's burden —
In patience to abide,
To veil the threat of terror
And check the show of pride;
By open speech and simple,
An hundred times made plain,
To seek another's profit,
And work another's gain.

Take up the White Man's burden —
The savage wars of peace —
Fill full the mouth of Famine
And bid the sickness cease;

And when your goal is nearest
  The end for others sought,
Watch Sloth and heathen Folly
  Bring all your hope to naught.

Take up the White Man's burden —
  No tawdry rule of kings,
But toil of serf and sweeper —
  The tale of common things.
The ports ye shall not enter,
  The roads ye shall not tread,
Go make them with your living,
  And mark them with your dead.

Take up the White Man's burden —
  And reap his old reward;
The blame of those ye better,
  The hate of those ye guard —
The cry of hosts ye humour
  (Ah, slowly!) toward the light: —
"Why brought ye us from bondage,
  Our loved Egyptian night?"

Take up the White Man's burden —
  Ye dare not stoop to less —
Nor call too loud on Freedom
  To cloak your weariness;
By all ye cry or whisper,
  By all ye leave or do,

The silent, sullen peoples
  Shall weigh your Gods and you.

Take up the White Man's burden —
  Have done with childish days —
The lightly proffered laurel
  The easy, ungrudged praise.
Comes now, to search your manhood
  Through all the thankless years,
Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom,
  The judgment of your peers!

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